herpy

SNAKES

Indian Sand Boa

Eryx johnii

Eryx johnii is a small, stoutly built sand boa from dry South Asia. It spends most of its time buried in loose soil, often with the blunt tail, which resembles a head, as the only visible part. It is calm, rarely bites and does not need much space, so it suits well as a first snake.

Family: Boidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**50-90 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-28 °C**
Basking spot	**32-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-25 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**4-14 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**120-180 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Near Threatened (NT)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult *Eryx johnii* needs an enclosure of at least 60 × 30 × 30 cm (length × width × height). The species uses almost no height, so floor area is what counts; a large female needs a larger enclosure.
TEMPERATURE	*Eryx johnii* needs a warm and a cool end. The sand at the warm spot must be 32-35 °C and at the cool end 24-28 °C. The air in the enclosure must be 26-28 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	*Eryx johnii* comes from dry lowland areas, and humidity should be about 40-50 %. During a shed it can be up to 60 %. A hygrometer shows whether the figure holds.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Eryx johnii* is most active at dusk and at night, and UVB has not been documented as necessary for the species.
FEEDING	*Eryx johnii* takes whole prey and is known for its good appetite. The staple food is mice; large adult females can take small rats. The young are large at birth and can start on newborn rats or small fuzzy mice.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Eryx johnii* is calm and rarely tries to bite; when frightened, it is more likely to thrash its body without striking. If it bites anyway, the hand must not be pulled away, because that can injure the snake.
NATIVE RANGE	Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, India and Nepal.