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SNAKES

Red-tailed Green Ratsnake

Gonyosoma oxycephalum

Gonyosoma oxycephalum is a large, slender arboreal snake from the rainforests of South-East Asia, with an emerald-green body, a reddish-brown tail and a pointed head. It grows to about 2.4 m, is diurnal and lives in the tree canopy. It needs a tall, humid enclosure and a calm keeper, because its temperament can be unpredictable.

Family: Colubridae Former name: *Elaphe oxycephala; Coluber oxycephalus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**150-240 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**150 × 60 × 150 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-29 °C**
Basking spot	**29-30 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-25 °C**
Humidity	**70-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-48 months**
Clutch size	**3-12 eggs**
Incubation	**90-125 days** at 25-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs a tall, spacious enclosure of at least 150 × 60 × 150 cm (length × width × height). The species is an active climber, and height matters more than floor area. Bigger is better, ideally 180 × 70 × 150 cm or more.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the temperature should be 25-29 °C. A warm spot in the upper part of the enclosure may reach 29-30 °C, but no more. The species does not tolerate high heat, so beware of overheating, especially in summer.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should be 70-80 %, and it should fluctuate slightly between day and night. Mist the enclosure 1-2 times a day, so that it keeps the air humid and imitates the rainy season, and make sure the surfaces dry again.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal, and a steady daily rhythm of about 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness all year is important, also for breeding.

FEEDING

Gonyosoma oxycephalum eats whole prey. In the wild this means birds, bird eggs, lizards and bats, and in captivity the species can be trained to take frozen and thawed rodents.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Gonyosoma oxycephalum is defensive and can be unpredictable. When it feels threatened, it inflates its throat, hisses and strikes. Bites are not venomous, but can be deep and painful.

NATIVE RANGE

Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Philippines.