herpy

SNAKES

Scarlet kingsnake

Lampropeltis elapsoides

Lampropeltis elapsoides is a small, slender kingsnake from the south-eastern USA with red, black and yellow rings that mimic a venomous coral snake. It is secretive and nocturnal, a skilled escape artist, and in the wild lives almost entirely on small skinks and other slender reptiles. Many animals refuse mice, so the species is one for experienced keepers.

Family: Colubridae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**40-76 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-29 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-22 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**4-12 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**40-65 days** at 27-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little documented knowledge exists about the care of *Lampropeltis elapsoides*, because the species is rarely kept and bred only to a small extent.
TEMPERATURE	The species needs a stable, moderate temperature without strong heat sources. By day the temperature should be 24-29 °C, warmest at one end, and at night 20-22 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The enclosure should be humid: 50-70 % relative humidity, measured in the middle of the enclosure. The substrate should be slightly damp but not wet, and ventilation good so that it does not go mouldy.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is nocturnal and shy and does not like bright light. UVB is not necessary, and it is not documented whether the species benefits from it. Lighting in the enclosure should be dim, with plenty of shade and cover.
FEEDING	Food is the most difficult thing about *Lampropeltis elapsoides*. In the wild the species takes almost only skinks and other slender lizards and, to a lesser extent, small snakes.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Lampropeltis elapsoides* is secretive and nervous and most often shows itself at dusk and at night. It is a skilled escape artist, so the lid must always be closed.
NATIVE RANGE	United States.