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SNAKES

Arizona mountain kingsnake

Lampropeltis pyromelana

Lampropeltis pyromelana is a slender kingsnake from the mountains of the south-western USA, known for its red, black and white bands and its white snout. It reaches 50-100 cm, is fast and diurnal, and is kept dry and cool with a brumation. In the wild the species feeds mainly on lizards and can live 15-20 years.

Family: Colubridae English name: Arizona Mountain Kingsnake Former name: *Ophibolus pyromelanus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**50-100 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day and at dusk**
Lifestyle	**Rock-dwelling and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Montane forest and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**90 × 45 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-28 °C**
Basking spot	**28-30 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-20 °C**
Humidity	**40-50%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Winter rest	**10-13 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**3-9 eggs**
Incubation	**55-70 days** at 26-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
An adult needs at least 90 × 45 × 45 cm (length × width × height). The species is active, climbs on rocks and branches and uses the full height, so a taller enclosure is an advantage.

TEMPERATURE
The species comes from cooler mountain regions and does not tolerate the high temperatures used for many other kingsnakes.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
The species comes from a dry area and manages with a humidity of 40-50 %, and brief peaks up to 60 % are of no consequence. Prolonged high humidity causes skin problems and respiratory infections.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The species is most active in the morning and late afternoon but stays close to its hiding places. UVB is not necessary, but weak UVB lighting over part of the enclosure is beneficial and provides a natural day rhythm.

FEEDING
In the wild, lizards are the main food, and the snake also takes snakes, small rodents, bats and birds. In captivity most animals eat frozen-thawed mice, which is the safest diet.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
Lampropeltis pyromelana is fast and lively and suits a keeper with experience of other snakes best. Juveniles can be nervous and release musk or nip, but many become calm with regular, short handling.

NATIVE RANGE
United States.