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SNAKES

Giant Madagascar Hognose Snake

Leioheterodon madagascariensis

Leioheterodon madagascariensis is a large, powerful, diurnal snake from Madagascar that can grow to nearly 180 cm. The snout is pointed and used for digging, and when threatened it spreads its neck and hisses. It eats frogs, lizards, eggs and rodents. The snake is rear-fanged with a mild venom; bites are rare but can cause several days of swelling and pain.

Family: Pseudoxyrhophiidae Former name: *Heterodon madagascariensis; Lioheterodon madagascariensis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**90-150 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Savanna and dry forest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**150 × 60 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-27 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**7-12 eggs**
Incubation	**60 days** at 27-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little has been published about keeping *Leioheterodon madagascariensis*, and the species is not common in captivity.
TEMPERATURE	The enclosure must have a clear gradient. The cool side is kept at 24-27 °C, and the warm side, measured at the surface under the heat source, at 29-32 °C. At night the temperature is lowered slightly, to around 22-24 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 60-80%, with a humid hide (a box with damp coconut fibre or sphagnum), which helps during shedding. The substrate may dry out somewhat more for a period corresponding to the dry season, but never completely.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal. The lighting can run on 12 hours of light and 12 hours of dark. UVB is not necessary but can be beneficial for health and wellbeing. The Ferguson zone has not been documented.
FEEDING	In the wild *Leioheterodon madagascariensis* eats frogs and toads, lizards, fish, eggs, nestlings and rodents. The species is easy to feed and in captivity takes thawed rats and mice.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Leioheterodon madagascariensis* is active and energetic and can usually be tamed and handled. Young animals are more nervous and defensive and may hiss, spread the neck, make mock strikes or play dead.
NATIVE RANGE	Madagascar.