herpy

SNAKES

Rough-scaled Python

Morelia carinata

Morelia carinata is a slender, tree-dwelling python from a small area of the Kimberley in north-western Australia. It is dark brown with pale spots, has keeled scales that feel like sandpaper and unusually long teeth. The species is one of Australia's rarest snakes in the wild, grows to about 2 m in length and is active at dusk and at night. Little documented knowledge of its care exists.

Family: Pythonidae Former name: *Python carinatus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**150-200 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**600-800 g**
Lifespan	**20-25 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and rock-dwelling**
Habitat	**Rainforest and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 100 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-30 °C**
Basking spot	**33-36 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-25 °C**
Humidity	**50-65%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**18-36 months**
Clutch size	**6-15 eggs**
Incubation	**55-70 days** at 30-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
Little documented knowledge exists about the care of *Morelia carinata*, because the species is rare and first came into captivity in 2000.

TEMPERATURE
The enclosure must have a clear gradient: a warm and a cold end, so that the snake chooses for itself. Use a daytime temperature of 26-30 °C, a basking and heat spot of 33-36 °C and a cold end of about 25-27 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
Humidity is kept at 50-65 %, a little above the 40-60 % that suits most *Morelia* species, because the species lives in monsoon rainforest and humid gorges. The figure is an estimate; measurements from the habitat do not exist.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The species is active at dusk and at night. Pythons have long been kept without UVB, but UVB probably benefits their health and is therefore recommended, as for the other *Morelia* species.

FEEDING
Morelia carinata eats whole prey. Use frozen and fully thawed mice and rats, never live animals. Thaw the prey in a closed container and warm it to body temperature. Never heat it in a microwave, and never offer it half-frozen.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
Morelia carinata is calm and rarely bites. Leave a new snake in peace for a couple of weeks, until it eats. Then start with short, calm sessions, and avoid the head and tail.

NATIVE RANGE
Australia.