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SNAKES

Central Ratsnake

Pantherophis alleghaniensis

Pantherophis alleghaniensis is a large, agile, non-venomous rat snake from the eastern and central USA. Adults are black in the north and grey with dark blotches in the south, and they climb and swim well. It reaches 100-185 cm and needs a large enclosure with climbing opportunities. The species is hardy and feeds readily, but is more defensive than *Pantherophis guttatus*.

Family: Colubridae Former name: *Elaphe alleghaniensis; Pantherophis spiloides; Elaphe obsoleta spiloides*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**100-185 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**By day and at dusk**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**180 × 90 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-25 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Winter rest	**10-15 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**5-27 eggs**
Incubation	**65-70 days** at 27-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult *Pantherophis alleghaniensis* needs an enclosure of at least 180 × 90 × 90 cm (length × width × height). The species is active and climbs, so height and climbing opportunities are important.
TEMPERATURE	There must be a distinct gradient, so that the snake can choose for itself. The basking spot under the heat source should be 29-32 °C, and the cool end 22-25 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 50-70 %, lowest by day and highest at night. Mist as needed, and put moist sphagnum in the hide at the cool end.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Pantherophis alleghaniensis* is active by day and at dusk and needs a distinct day-night rhythm with strong daylight. The light is on for about 12 hours a day, controlled by a timer.
FEEDING	*Pantherophis alleghaniensis* eats whole, frozen and thawed rodents. Juveniles get mice, and in time they move on to rats. Quail eggs, quail chicks and small chicks give variety.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Pantherophis alleghaniensis* is shy and prefers to avoid conflict, but defends itself when startled.
NATIVE RANGE	United States and Canada.