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SNAKES

Indian Rock Python

Python molurus

Python molurus is a large, placid python from the forests, grasslands and rocky foothills of South Asia, with brownish, pale-edged blotches on a light background. Adults are usually 250-350 cm, and females are far heavier than males. The species tolerates drier conditions than the closely related *Python bivittatus*, needs a very large, escape-proof enclosure with a pool and a great deal of experience, and can live for 20 years or more.

Family: Pythonidae Former name: *Python molurus molurus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**250-400 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Savanna, dry forest and wetland**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**300 × 150 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-31 °C**
Basking spot	**32-34 °C**
Temperature, night	**26-28 °C**
Humidity	**50-60%**
Water	**Water section**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**24-36 months**
Clutch size	**12-100 eggs**
Incubation	**65-85 days** at 28-32 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix I**
EU annex	**Annex A**
IUCN	**Near Threatened (NT)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
Only a little care information exists that applies solely to *Python molurus*; size, heat and diet are therefore borrowed from *Python bivittatus*, which is kept in the same way in captivity. The figures are cautious estimates.

TEMPERATURE
The enclosure must have a distinct gradient. The basking spot should be 32-34 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer, the rest of the enclosure 27-31 °C by day and 26-28 °C at night.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
Humidity should be 50-60 %, measured with a digital hygrometer in the middle of the enclosure. This is slightly lower than for *Python bivittatus*, because *P. molurus* lives in drier areas, but never far from water.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The species is most active at dusk and at night, but needs a fixed day-night rhythm with about 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness.

FEEDING
P. molurus is a carnivore and needs whole prey animals, mammals and birds. Rats are standard, and as the snake grows, rabbits, guinea pigs, quail and chicks are used.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
P. molurus is sluggish and calm and rarely aggressive, but an animal over 250 cm is stronger than a human and can be life-threatening.

NATIVE RANGE
India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.