herpy

SNAKES

Ball Python

Python regius

Python regius is a quiet, compact python from the savannas of West and Central Africa that rolls itself into a ball when it feels insecure. It reaches 100-150 cm, is easy to handle and very widely kept, but requires high humidity, stable heat and patience when it goes off its food.

Family: Pythonidae Former name: *Boa regia; Hortulia regia*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**100-150 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-30 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Savanna**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-27 °C**
Basking spot	**30-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-26 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**12-36 months**
Clutch size	**3-11 eggs**
Incubation	**55-60 days** at 31-32 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Near Threatened (NT)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult *Python regius* needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height), and the enclosure must be at least as long as the snake, so it can stretch out completely.

TEMPERATURE

The enclosure must have a gradient. The warm hide must be 30-32 °C, the cool side 22-27 °C and the night 21-26 °C. The temperature in the enclosure must never exceed 35 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity should be 60-80 % by day and preferably rise to 80-100 % at night. Short fluctuations are harmless. Humidity is important for the snake's breathing and for a clean shed.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Python regius is most active at dusk and at night but needs a fixed day and night rhythm. At the species' equatorial range 12 hours of light and 12 hours of dark are suitable, controlled by a timer.

FEEDING

Python regius eats whole, frozen and thawed rodents. Rats and mice are the standard, but variety in the form of African soft-furred rats, gerbils, young guinea pigs and chicks gives a more varied diet.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Python regius is calm and seldom aggressive. When threatened it rolls into a ball. Juveniles can be defensive and snappy but get used to handling.

NATIVE RANGE

Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo - Kinshasa, Mali, Uganda and South Sudan.