herpy

SNAKES

African Rock Python

Python sebae

Python sebae is Africa's largest snake: a heavy-bodied, brownish python with a dark spear-shaped mark on the head and stair-step blotches along the back. Adults are usually 300-500 cm long and weigh 45-65 kg. The species lives in savanna, forest and by water south of the Sahara, has a reputation for being irritable and needs a very large, escape-proof enclosure, a pool and great experience.

Family: Pythonidae Former name: *Python sebae sebae*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**300-500 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-30 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Savanna, rainforest 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	**60-70%**
Water	**Water section**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-60 months**
Clutch size	**20-100 eggs**
Incubation	**65-80 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

No detailed care information exists for *Python sebae*, which is a rarely kept species, and size, warmth, humidity and diet are therefore borrowed from *Python bivittatus* and *Python molurus*, which are kept in captivity in the same way.

TEMPERATURE

The enclosure needs a clear 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 60-70 %, measured with a digital hygrometer in the middle of the enclosure. The species lives in moist savanna and forest near water, and the figure is borrowed from *Python bivittatus*.

LIGHTING AND UVB

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

FEEDING

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

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

P. sebae is one of the most defensive pythons. Animals caught in the wild rarely get used to handling or to living in an enclosure, and even captive-bred animals do not always become calm.

NATIVE RANGE

Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Kenya, Congo - Kinshasa, Congo - Brazzaville, Gabon, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Angola, Somalia and Equatorial Guinea.