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SNAKES

Boa Constrictor

Boa constrictor

Boa constrictor is a heavily built boa from South America, especially east of the Andes, brown to grey with dark saddle markings and a tail that in many local forms is reddish brown to red. It reaches 180-300 cm, is active at dusk and at night and lives 20-30 years. It is larger than the closely related *Boa imperator* and requires a large enclosure, infrequent meals and a keeper who can take responsibility for decades.

Family: Boidae Former name: *Constrictor constrictor* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**180-300 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Savanna, dry forest and rainforest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**240 × 120 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-30 °C**
Basking spot	**30-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**55-75%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**18-48 months**
Litter size	**10-65 young**
Gestation	**100-120 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult animal over 240 cm needs an enclosure of at least 240 × 120 × 120 cm (length × width × height), and smaller adults of 180-240 cm at least 180 × 90 × 90 cm.
TEMPERATURE	There must be a gradient from cool to warm. The air at the basking spot should be 30-32 °C and the cool end 24-26 °C, and the whole enclosure should contain zones between 24 and 32 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 55-75 % and fluctuate a little. Briefly above 70 % does no harm if the enclosure is allowed to dry out, whereas persistent damp causes mould. Before a shed, 75-85 % can help the animal to shed in one piece.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is nocturnal and does not need strong light, but UVB is recommended. It belongs to Ferguson zone 2: occasional sun-basking. The target is a UV index of 2-3 at the basking spot.
FEEDING	*B. constrictor* is a carnivore and must be given whole prey. Young animals get mice and small rats, and adults get rats, young rabbits, guinea pigs, chicks and quail. Variety is healthy.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*B. constrictor* is an intelligent, individual snake. Some animals tolerate and like handling, others prefer to be left in peace. Hatchlings and young animals are often nervous and may hiss and bite.
NATIVE RANGE	Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Trinidad & Tobago.