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SNAKES

Common Kingsnake

Lampropeltis getula

Lampropeltis getula is a large, glossy kingsnake from the south-eastern USA, black or dark brown with narrow, white to yellow cross-bands that form a chain pattern. It reaches 90-150 cm, eats rodents, lizards and other snakes, and is robust and tolerant. It can live for more than 20 years and is kept singly in a floor enclosure with a basking spot and moderate humidity.

Family: Colubridae Former name: *Lampropeltis getula getula* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**90-150 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-30 years**
Active	**By day and at dusk**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Wetland and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**150 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**21-28 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**12-48 months**
Clutch size	**3-25 eggs**
Incubation	**60-70 days** at 26-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs an enclosure of at least 150 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height). Larger is better, because the species is active and explores the whole enclosure. Smaller animals of under 100 cm can manage in 120 × 60 × 60 cm.

TEMPERATURE

The animal regulates its temperature by moving between warm and cool places, so the enclosure must have a clear gradient.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity should be 40-60 %, measured with a digital hygrometer in the middle of the enclosure. It is higher at the cool end and at night and lower at the warm end, and that is normal. The figures apply to kingsnakes in general.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is active by day and basks in the wild. It can manage without UVB, but UVB is recommended for the best welfare. That suits Ferguson zone 2.

FEEDING

L. getula is a carnivore and needs whole prey. The most important food source in captivity is mice, and as the animal grows, young rats are used.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

L. getula is robust and tolerant. Give a new animal about 2 weeks in peace, and start handling only when it eats regularly. Begin with short sessions of no more than 5 minutes, and do not put the animal back until it is calm.

NATIVE RANGE

United States.