herpy

SNAKES

Eastern milksnake

Lampropeltis triangulum

Lampropeltis triangulum is a slender, secretive snake from eastern North America. The name long covered a whole group of brightly coloured snakes, and many of those sold under it now belong to other species. The snake is nocturnal, calm and easy to keep, but it feeds on rodents and must not be housed with other snakes.

Family: Colubridae Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**55-115 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**23-27 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-23 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Winter rest	**11-13 °C** 10-12 weeks
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-48 months**
Clutch size	**2-24 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**58-65 days** at 27-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult *Lampropeltis triangulum* needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 45 cm. Small animals under 90 cm manage with 90 × 45 × 45 cm. Juveniles can start in a small box and be moved up as they grow.

TEMPERATURE

Lampropeltis triangulum is nocturnal and warms itself mostly under stones and other objects that the sun has heated, but occasionally basks in the open.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

A relative humidity of 40-60 % is suitable. It may be higher at the cool end and at night and lower at the warm end. Measure in the middle of the enclosure with a digital hygrometer.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is nocturnal and does not need strong light. UVB is not necessary, but may be beneficial.

FEEDING

Adult *Lampropeltis triangulum* are fed mice and young rats, and large individuals take small to medium-sized rats. Prey should be frozen and thawed and no more than 1.5 times as wide as the snake's widest point.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Lampropeltis triangulum is usually calm and tolerates handling well, but some animals are nervous and bite. After arriving home the animal is given a week or two to settle in, and handling begins only when it feeds regularly.

NATIVE RANGE

Canada and United States.