

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

BALL PYTHONS

(*Python regius*)

General Information

Ball pythons are found throughout western and central Africa. Their habitat includes open forests, grasslands, and rocky areas. Ball Pythons make great pets but are a shy snake and will typically curl into a ball when handled. Adult size for males is 4-5 feet and females are slightly larger and occasional reach 6 feet in length. With proper care Ball pythons are very long lived snakes and one can expect their snake to live 20-40 years. The oldest Ball python in captivity lived over 47 years. Prehistoric Pets promotes responsible snake ownership and we recommend locking cages that prevent accidental escape. Large constrictors and other escaped snakes can have a negative impact on the general public which can lead to a ban of snake ownership.

Temperature

Ball pythons should be maintained at 85-90 degrees during the day, with a hot spot under the heat light reaching 95 degrees. Nighttime temperatures need to range between 75-80 degrees. Humidity should be maintained between 65-80% and this can be accomplished by periodically misting the enclosure. Snakes shed in one complete piece, if yours is shedding in pieces the humidity is too low. Another option to increase humidity is to provide a box with a small entrance, for the snake to enter, filled with damp potting soil and moss.



Housing

Baby and juvenile Ball pythons can be maintained in our 29 gallon terrarium. Adults can be maintained comfortably in 40 gallon or larger terrariums. An ideal cage will include multiple hiding spots for your snake to feel secure. Never place a cage near a window where sunlight can directly shine on your cage. Cages placed in direct sunlight can easily overheat and ultimately lead to the death of your snake. Ball pythons are secretive snakes and will do best if provided with some type of hiding place.

Bedding

Our recommendation for bedding is bark, coconut bark, pine shavings, or aspen shavings.

Food

Ball Pythons are known to be sporadic feeders and there are many reasons why your snake may refuse to eat. One of the most common problems is a snake that has been eating on a regular basis and suddenly stops. This problem is usually associated with the winter fasting period, which is caused by lower than normal nighttime temperatures. Breeding season is next and most Ball pythons will still refuse to eat. One can expect adult ball pythons to refuse food from November to March or even longer. Some baby Ball pythons will also refuse to eat and there are a number of methods to deal with this problem. We like to use a brown paper bag with a fuzzy mouse inside. Put your snake inside the bag and place the bag on the cool side of its cage. Leave your snake in the bag overnight and by morning most snakes will have eaten. Remember to keep trying for a few weeks if this method doesn't work the first time. We recommend that you feed baby and juvenile Ball pythons 1-2 times per week. Adult Ball pythons can be fed once every 7-10 days to maintain proper body weight.

Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter or left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The bedding should be completely changed once a month and fresh clean water should be provided at all times. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner, we recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Ball pythons that are eating regularly can be handled on a daily basis. Remember to always wash your hands after handling any reptile.

www.reptileguru.com

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