

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Grey-Banded King Snake (*Lampropeltis alterna*)

General Information

Grey-banded king snakes are found throughout Texas and parts of Mexico. There are two forms of grey-banded king snakes, the alterna phase and the blairi phase. The alterna phase can be found in the western part of its range and the blairi phase in the east. The alterna phase has 15-23 saddles and has very little red or orange within those saddles. The blairi phase has less than 15 saddles and has wide reddish bands. The typical habitat of this snake is dry rocky areas, where it feeds on lizards and small rodents. These king snakes reach adulthood within 3-4 years and seldom exceed 40 inches in length. Grey-banded king snakes are secretive snakes and will do best if provided with some type of hiding place. With proper care you can expect your king snake to live 10-20 years or more. Prehistoric Pets promotes responsible snake ownership and we recommend locking cages that prevent accidental escape. Escaped snakes can have a negative impact on the general public which can lead to a ban of snake ownership.



Temperature

Grey-banded king snakes need to be maintained between 84-90 degrees during the day. Nighttime temperatures should range between 68-75 degrees. If you keep your snake too cool it can regurgitate, so make sure the daytime temperatures are correctly maintained.

Housing

King snakes can be housed comfortably in a 29-40 gallon terrarium as adults. Ideally, the larger the snake the more room you want to provide. Never place a cage near a window where sunlight can directly shine on it. Cages placed in direct sunlight can easily overheat and ultimately lead to the death of your snake.

Bedding

Almost any type of bedding can be used for king snakes. We recommend using carpet, bark, pine shavings, or aspen shavings. A deep layer is recommended to allow your snake to hide if it chooses to do so.

Food

King snakes feed on pinkie and fuzzy mice as babies and juveniles. As your snake grows it will soon move up to adult mice. We recommend that you feed baby and juvenile king snakes one time per week. Adult king snakes can be fed once every 7-10 days to maintain proper body weight. Young grey-banded king snakes may refuse to eat rodents at first. There are many tricks to get stubborn snakes to eat, some include split head or lizard scented pinkies. If you're having difficulties please contact us and we'll do our best to help. Like most snakes, king snakes typically will not eat when they are preparing to shed. After your snake has shed you can return to your normal feeding regimen. If your snake doesn't eat make sure you remove the rodent from the cage. Rodents, when they are hungry, can bite snakes and can injure or kill them.

Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter 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. King snakes can be handled on a daily basis and always wash your hands before and after handling them.

www.reptileguru.com

Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085

"Maps courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries."