

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Western Hognose Snakes (*Heterodon nasicus*)

General Information

Western hognose snakes inhabit the central United States. They get their common name from the upturned scale on their nose. This scale enables the snake to dig and find food buried in the ground.

Hognose snakes produce mild venom that is harmless to humans but is toxic to small animals. When threatened, hognose snakes will flatten their necks, hiss, and stand similar to cobras. The most unusual defense mechanism is when hognose snakes will flip upside down and play dead. These snakes will play dead when hissing and acting aggressive isn't working. Hognose snakes are sexually mature within three years and adults rarely grow over 32 inches. Gravid females will lay 10-20 eggs that hatch within two months. Hognose snakes are secretive snakes and will do best if provided with some type of hiding place. With proper care you can expect your hognose 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

Hognose snakes need to be maintained between 85-92 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 maintained.

Housing

Hognose 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 your cage. 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 hognose 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

Hognose snakes feed on pinkie and fuzzy mice as babies and juveniles. As your snake grows it will soon move up to adult mice. Baby hognose snakes are known to be difficult eaters. Babies usually have a preference for frogs and getting them to eat mice may take some time and effort. If you are having these problems with your baby hognose snake let us know and we'll do our best to help. We recommend that you feed baby and juvenile hognose snakes one time per week. Adult hognose snakes can be fed once every 7-10 days to maintain proper body weight. Like most snakes, hognose snakes typically will not eat when they are preparing to shed. After your snake has shed you can return to your normal feeding regiment. If your snake doesn't eat make sure you remove the rodent from the cage. Rodents, when hungry, can bite snakes and possibly injure or kill your snake.

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. Hognose snakes can be handled on a daily basis and always wash your hands before and after handling them.

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