

# Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

## Variable King Snake (*L. mexicana thayeri*)

### General Information

Variable king snakes are found near Tamaulipas Mexico. These king snakes vary in color and pattern and the different phases can hatch from a single clutch. The three distinct phases are the milk snake phase, black phase, and leonis phase. The leonis phase is very similar to the grey-banded king snake. Variable kings come from a semi arid to arid environment and their cage should be set up similar to their natural habitat. These snakes reach adulthood within three years and grow to 2-3 feet. Variable 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

Variable 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 your cage. Cages placed in direct sunlight can easily overheat and ultimately lead to the death of your snake. Never house your king snake with other snakes, it may eat them.

### 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. 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 regiment. 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.

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**Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085**

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