

BLACK RAT SNAKE CARE GUIDE

Pantherophis obsoletus obsoletus

Introduction The Black Rat Snake is a moderate to large sized snake which is a member of the largest family of snakes, colubrids. They are a semi arboreal species who will hunt and even mate in trees but generally sleep on the ground. They are constrictors and active mainly at dawn and dusk (crepuscular). Also known as Black Chicken Snake and Black Pilot Snake.

Experience Level Beginner to Intermediate

Temperament Black Ratsnakes are generally placid however a couple of them take on the more defensive characteristics of the sub-species *pantherophis obsoletus lindheimeri* (Texas ratsnake) by displaying the defensive-S position, often with their mouth wide open.

Hatchlings are often a bit nippy but can normally be tamed easily.

Captive Variants Wild Type, Albino cinnamon, Albino Lemon Cowsucker, Albino Leucistic, Albino White Sided, Amelanistic T+, Amelanistic T-, Calico, Brindle, Calico Cowsucker, Caramel Albino, Cinnamon, Grape Albino, Hypomelanistic, Lavender, Lavender Albino, Lemon Cowsucker, Leucistic, Rusty, Ultra Black, White Sided

(Some of these may be alternative names for the same variant)

Expected Adult Length 120 to 180cm

Recommended Housing Vivarium or plastic tubs

tubs we found them to be much better to keep clean.

Other requirements:

Suitably large water bowl for them to drink and bathe

-A minimum of 2 hides (1 in the cool end and 1 in the warm end)

-Climbing branches are advantageous but not essential

Temperature Range 22°C (72°F) to 28°C (82°F)

Recommended Heating Viv - Guarded Ceramic heater or heat mat

Tub - Heat mat

Whichever method is used, the temperature should be controlled by a suitable thermostat and monitored using a digital thermometer

Origin Eastern & Central United States and Canada

Natural Environment Agricultural/farm land, woodlands, urban areas or around swamps, rivers and lakes. Well adapted to climbing trees in search of birds nests.

Recommended Substrate We prefer to use Aspen.

Natural Diet Bats, Birds & their eggs, Frogs, Hares, Insects, Lizards, Moles, Rabbits, Reptile Eggs, Rodents, Squirrels and Weasels