

CAPE HOUSE SNAKE CARE SHEET

Boaedon Capensis

Introduction Cape House Snakes are the most commonly kept house snake species. They are a small, non venomous colubrid that is sexually dimorphic in that females grow significantly larger than males. The name "House Snake" was given as they are often found around houses and other buildings looking for food.

House snakes are easy to maintain in captivity and make a great alternative to the more common species which are usually recommended for beginners. There is a great deal that is not fully understood regarding house snakes especially in the areas of identification of individual species and of genetics which makes them an excellent challenge for the more experienced keeper.

All House Snakes are believed to be nocturnal however our experience and observation of their behaviour in captivity indicates that Cape House Snakes may be more active at dusk and dawn (crepuscular) than at night. They are largely a terrestrial species.

Experience Level Beginner

Temperament Generally very placid

Captive Variants Wild Type, T- Albino, T+ Albino, Hypo, Blue/Anerly/Ghost, Patternless, Striped, Red Phase, Green Phase, Hi-bino, Piebald/Calico

Expected Adult Length Males 60 - 80cm : Females 80 - 140cm

Recommended Housing Vivarium or plastic tubs

We prefer to use tubs as we have found them to be much easier to keep clean.

Other requirements:

-Small water bowl

-A minimum of 2 hides (1 in the cool end and 1 in the warm end) one of which should be moist

As Cape House Snakes inhabit many different environments we would recommend offering as much variation as possible for example climbing branches and low level greenery as well as dry and moist areas, all of which will probably be well used.

Suggested Housing Sizes Housing sizes are a matter of personal preference (for you and your snake) and you should choose what best suits you but we generally use the Really Useful Products plastic tubs and move up in size as the snake grows. For particularly small hatchlings we often start them off in plastic takeaway food storage tubs to prevent escapees.

Some of our tub size recommendations are listed below.

0.35Ltr-/155mm x 100mm x 40mm

- Hatchlings

1.75Ltr / - 245mm x 180mm x 70mm

- Large Hatchlings

5 Litre/- 340mm x 200mm x 125mm

- Yearlings

9 Litre/- 395mm x 255mm x 155mm

- Larger Yearling Females, Sub Adult Males

12 Litre/- 465mm x 270mm x 150mm

- Sub Adult Females, Adult Males

24.5Lt/ - 600mm x 400mm x 150mm

- Adult Females, Large Adult Males

50 Litre/ 710mm x 440mm x 230mm

When moving snakes into a larger enclosure, particularly if the snake is a little nervous or has a tendency to go off their food easily, we fill the enclosure with extra greenery to ensure they feel secure. As they begin to settle we remove pieces of greenery to allow them more space to move around in. It is also a good idea to put an unwashed item of furniture or greenery from their old enclosure into their new enclosure for the first few days as we find that something familiar helps them acclimatise to their new surroundings much more quickly.

Temperature Range 21°C (70°F) to 31°C (88°F)

Recommended Heating Viv - Guarded heat Bulb 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 South Africa

Natural Environment Found in a wide range of environments including ; scrublands, forests, wooded areas, grasslands, coastal areas, shrublands, heathlands, houses, barns and other buildings

Recommended Substrate We use Aspen and provide a moist hide of vermiculite and/or moss or paper towel.

Natural Diet Rodents, Bats, Birds, Lizards and occasionally Frogs

Primary Captive Diet Rodents

Other Observations Care should be taken when feeding your house snake as they are usually quite aggressive feeders!