

## ROSY BOA CARE GUIDE

### Lichanura Trivirgata species

**Introduction** Rosy Boas are a small, blunt tailed, live bearing member of the Boidae family of snakes. They are primarily a terrestrial (ground dwelling) species which is largely nocturnal (active at night) for the majority of the year but during spring they become more active at dawn and dusk (crepuscular). The name "Rosy" referred to their rosy colouration although this description has become less relevant over time.

Most Rosy Boas have 3 longitudinal stripes which are well defined in specimens from desert regions whereas specimens from Coastal areas have stripes with much more jagged edges and spotting, often appearing to have no stripes at all.

**Experience Level** Intermediate

**Temperament** Rosy Boas are generally extremely docile however they may bite if disturbed.

They have a tendency to hide under the substrate with just the tip of their nose visible and any movement in front of them will incite a lightning fast and incredibly accurate feeding response. A bite from a Rosy Boa can be quite painful therefore it is always best to let them know you are coming by touching them further down their body.

**Subspecies** There are a number of subspecies of Rosy Boa, some can be easily identified whereas others are virtually impossible to identify if the origin is unknown. As the taxonomy of Rosy Boas is still unclear, we have listed all of the subspecies below however not all of these (particularly *arizonae* and *andsaslowi*) are widely accepted:

Mexican Rosy Boa, *Lichanura Trivirgata Trivirgata*

Cream/beige ground colour with chocolate brown to black, well defined, stripes. Mexicans are believed to be the smallest and most hardy of captive Rosy Boas.

Coastal Rosy Boa, *Lichanura Trivirgata Roseofusca*

Beige or grey, sometimes quite dark, ground colour with orange or red/brown rough edged stripes often with a lot of random spotting in the darker colour. Some specimens have so much spotting that they appear to have no stripes at all. Coastals are believed to be the largest captive Rosy Boas.

Baja Rosy Boa, *Lichanura Trivirgata Myriolepis* or *Lichanura Trivirgata Saslowi*

Beige or grey ground colour with orange or red/brown stripes.

Desert Rosy Boa, *Lichanura Trivirgata Gracia*

Beige or grey ground colour with orange or red/brown usually well defined stripes.

Arizona Rosy Boa, *Lichanura Trivirgata Arizonae*

Beige or grey ground colour with orange to chocolate brown stripes

Localities There are many different localities available in each of the subspecies but unless the origin is known it is impossible to even attempt a guess.

Genetic mutations A number of genetic mutations are beginning to appear in Rosy Boas, some of which are listed below:

Amel/Albino Coastal, Amel/ Albino Desert, 'Limburg' Amel/Albino Baja

'White Water' Amel/Albino Coastal x Desert

Hypo Desert, Hypo Baja

Axanthic Mexican

Ghost Baja

Anerythristic

Red Eyed Snow, Black Eyed Snow

Expected Adult Length 60 to 120cm

Recommended Housing Vivarium or plastic tubs

We use both vivs and tubs but mainly use vivs, particularly for females, as we find them much more secure for live bearers.

Other requirements:

- Small water bowl with fresh drinking water
- A minimum of 2 hides (1 in the cool end and 1 in the warm end)
- Deep substrate for burrowing
- Low climbing bushes may be advantageous but not essential

Temperature Range 23C (73F) to 31C (88F)

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 United States of America and Mexico

Natural Environment Rosy Boas normally inhabit desert areas, arid scrubland, brushland, rocky outcroppings and ravines. They may also climb low lying shrubs and bushes but are usually found under rocks and in crevices.

Recommended Substrate Rosy Boas like to bury themselves in the substrate and we therefore recommend and use a deep (2 to 3") covering of aspen. If using a deep substrate care should be taken to ensure that the correct temperature is maintained particularly when heating with a heat mat or cable as the substrate will act as an insulator. The temperature underneath the substrate could quite easily be 5C (9F) higher than on the top of the substrate.

Neonates are placed on plain white kitchen roll until feeding regularly.

Natural Diet Mainly rodents and other small mammals, but will occasionally feed on birds or lizards

Primary Captive Diet Rodents. We prefer to feed our snakes mice rather than rats as have found rats to be a little too fatty.

Feeding Frequency The recommended feeding schedule for neonates is approximately every 7 days.

Yearlings and young/small adults should normally be fed every 1 to 2 weeks.

Rosy Boas will get used to your feeding regime and in our experience can become quite lazy and could therefore become overweight easily. A more sporadic feeding regime as they age will help them to be more active and therefore remain fit and healthy.

We have no set rules regarding feeding rosy boas. They will be offered food anything from 1 to 4 weeks depending on their condition. As with any species of snake we tend to feed females more often than males. For adults, our starting point is normally feeding every 2 weeks. Gravid females should be offered food more frequently and although they will normally feed much more at this time, not all specimens will continue to do so throughout the entire pregnancy.

