



Corn Snake

Natural History

Common Name: Corn Snake, Red Rat Snake

Scientific Name: *Pantherophis guttatus*

Lifespan

- Roughly 5-10 years in the wild; 25+ years with good care in captivity

Size

- 3 – 4 ft; up to 6 ft

Distribution

- Southeastern and eastern United States (not found in Minnesota, Iowa, or Wisconsin)

Habitat

- Forests, forest/grassland edge, meadows, rocky hillsides

Habits

- Arboreal
- Harmless, but mistaken for venomous copperheads and rattlesnakes
- Vibrates tail when alarmed that may produce a buzzing or “rattling” sound when contacting dead vegetation or leaves

Diet

- Rodents, birds, birds’ eggs, lizards, and treefrogs; subdues prey by constriction





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Captive Care

Housing

- 20 gallon long aquarium or equivalent area for adults
- Secure, tight-fitting lid is necessary
- Substrate can be newspaper, cypress mulch, orchid bark, aspen shavings, reptile carpet, *avoid cedar chips, gravel or sand!*
- Sturdy water dish – water must be available at all times
- Hide box, especially filled with moist sphagnum moss for security and humidity
- Branches optional for climbing/enrichment

Temperature and Lighting

- Ambient cage temperatures in 70's F, with "hot area" of upper 80's F. Provide heat gradient
- "Hot area" can be achieved by using radiant heat, heat pad on outside of cage, or both
- Thermometer (temp gun or probe) to measure actual temperature is a necessity
- Lighting can be dome lamp with incandescent bulbs to produce heat as well, 12 hrs a day
- UVB lighting beneficial, but not necessary

Diet

- Frozen/thawed adult mice or small rats, whole prey cased links as alternative*
- Carnivore only, needs whole animal prey
- Avoid feeding live prey
- Offer food once a week

Special Notes

- Also called red rat snake
- Not found naturally in Minnesota, Iowa, or Wisconsin
- Named for belly coloration; resembles maize or Indian corn, and/or they hunt for prey around corn/grain buildings. NOT named because they live in cornfields or eat corn
- Corn snakes are solitary, so it's best to keep snakes individually
- Most corn snakes are docile and easy to handle
- Widely bred in captivity; over 100 different captive produced color morphs; most people own captive produced color morphs, not wild type coloration

