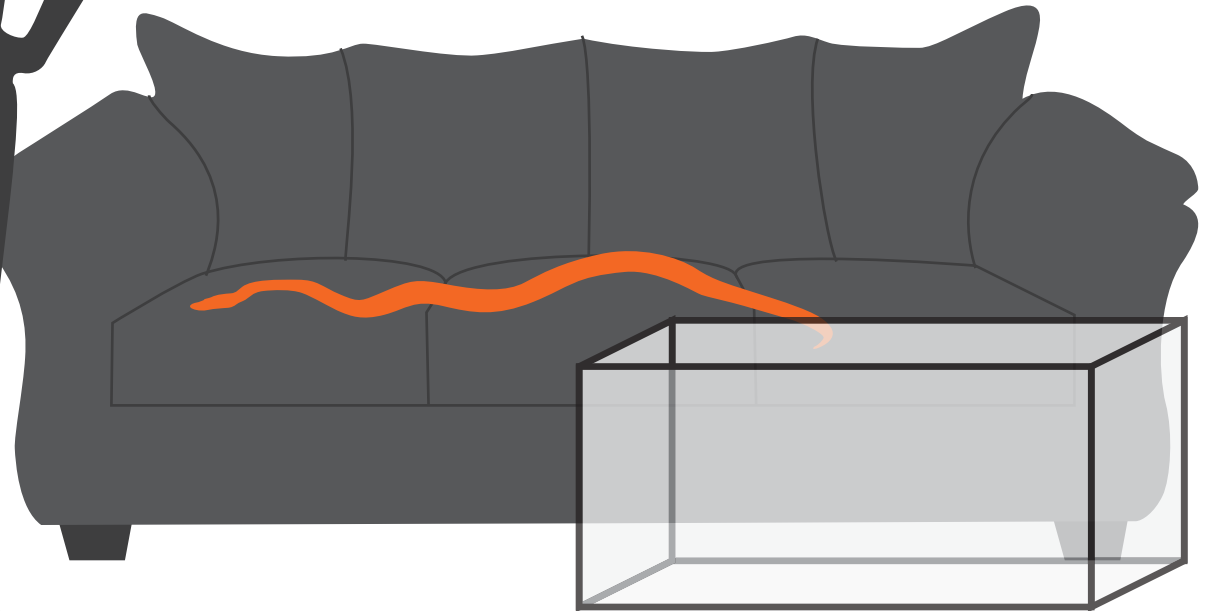


Ball Python

aka Royal Python - Scientific Name: *Python regius*

- Lifespan Roughly 20–30 years; record ~47 years
- Diet Frozen/thawed rats of appropriate size, mice OK, whole prey cased links as alternative
- Lighting Not necessary, heat can be achieved by heat pads only
- Temps Ambient cage temperature 75 F, with “hot area” of 85 to 95+ F. Provide heat gradient
- Humidity Provide a humidity box with moist sphagnum moss or paper towels
- Substrate Newspaper, cypress mulch, orchid bark, aspen shavings, reptile carpet, tile or slate
avoid cedar chips, gravel or sand

The average human male is about 6' tall, adult Ball Pythons are usually 3–4' (male) or 4–6' (female)



The average couch is about 86”W, the minimum size enclosure for one adult Ball Python is 36”W x 18”D x 12”H

For more information, visit: www.mnherpsoc.org



Ball Python

In the Wild

Distribution

- Sub-Saharan Africa (narrow strip of central and west central Africa)

Habitat

- Grassland, savanna, open woodland. Frequently shelters in termite mounds and mammal burrows

Habits

- Frequently shelters in termite mounds and mammal burrows, both of which provide humidity
- Harmless, most are very docile
- Primarily nocturnal
- May aestivate. In addition, males often fast during the breeding season, and females may fast during egg brooding.

Diet

- Rodents, birds, and birds' eggs; subdues prey by constriction
- Rodents include African soft-furred rats, gerbils, shrews, and striped mice.
- Juveniles and males may consume primarily nestling and immature birds

Captive Care

Housing

- 36 X 18 X 12 or equivalent area for adults. Young snakes 10 or 20 gallon tank or equivalent area
- Secure, tight-fitting lid or door is necessary
- Substrate can be newspaper, cypress mulch, orchid bark, aspen shavings, reptile carpet, tile or slate, avoid cedar chips, gravel or sand!
- Sturdy water dish – water must be available at all times
- Two hide boxes (warm side, cool side)
- Humidity box filled with moist sphagnum moss or paper towels etc. for security and humidity

Temperature and Lighting

- Ambient cage temperature 75 F, with “hot area” of 85 to 95+ F. Provide heat gradient
- “Hot area” can be achieved by using radiant heat, heat pad on outside of cage, or both
- Lighting not necessary, heat can be achieved by heat pads only
- However, lighting can be dome lamp with incandescent bulbs for heat as well - 12 hr cycle
- UVB lighting beneficial, but not necessary
- Thermometer (temp gun or probe) to measure actual temperature is a necessity
- Adjustable temperature heat pads, thermostat and/or rheostats for any heat source is beneficial

Diet

- Carnivore only, needs whole animal prey
- Frozen/thawed rats of appropriate size, mice OK, whole prey cased links as alternative*
- Feed once a week especially for juveniles, twice or once a month of a larger prey size for adults is OK, and may even be preferred
- Avoid feeding live prey
- Supplemental vitamins and minerals generally not necessary

Special Notes

- Called ball python for its defense mechanism of hiding its head within its coils
- Called royal python (= regius) as African rulers would wear this python (alive) as jewelry
- Fasting/refusal of food for a few months out of the year is common in both sexes.
 - Watch the snake's weight – if the snake begins to lose weight, it needs to be investigated
- Improper shedding and/or retained eye caps due to low/improper humidity is a common problem
- Widely bred in captivity; over 5,000 different captive produced color morphs known
- Morphs don't typically cause visible problems, but some do, e.g. spider morph “wobble”

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