

REPTILIA

We Specialize in Small Animals and Reptiles



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KENYAN SAND BOA- CARE

The Kenyan Sand Boa is found in sandy savannah areas of Kenya and adjacent African countries. Most specimens present in US collections have origins tracing back to imports from Kenya in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These snakes are uniquely adapted to a burrowing way of life, having tiny eyes, valvular nostrils to exclude sand and the lower lip is set back to provide a strong chisel-like nose for burrowing. Strongly tuberculate scales on the posterior provide additional traction for pushing through dense soils. Adult females average about 60cm in length. Many males are considerable smaller, with sexual maturity being attained at approximately 30cm!

HOUSING

- As large a vivarium or purpose-built enclosure as possible should be provided to enable room for exercise, and a thermal gradient to be created along the length of the tank (hot to cold). Wooden or fiberglass vivarium will provide the snake with some visual security and ventilation can be provided at snake level.
- Good ventilation is required, and additional ventilation holes may need to be created.
- A variety of particle substrates can be used to satisfy the needs of this fossorial specie. Aspen bedding, sand, and Care Fresh are popular with many keepers. Keep the substrate clean and dry at all times. As with all reptiles, do NOT use cedar or pine shavings. These items are toxic to reptiles.
- The vivarium should be cleaned out at least once a week with F10 disinfectant or similar disinfectant and spot cleaned daily to help prevent diseases.

TEMPERATURES AND HUMIDITY

- Reptiles are ectothermic, so a heat source is required.
- Temperatures should be measured with a maximum/minimum thermometer. During the cold winter months careful checking is required to ensure the heat sources are keeping the tank sufficiently warm. Heat sources should be guarded to prevent thermal burns.
- Humidity should be checked with a hygrometer and kept moderately high by spraying or fogging the enclosure at regular intervals.
- Temperatures must be measured to ensure the tank is not overheating especially in a small vivarium. The cool end should be maintained at 28°C, and the warm end should be maintained at 32°C and not exceed 35°C.

- Belly heat can be provided with a heat mat or heating pad (below the substrate or AstroTurf). If heat mat or heating pad does not supply sufficient heat an additional heat source must be added such as a Heat Emitter, Infrared Heat Lamp or a Moon Lamp. This should be set on a thermostat so that the overnight temperature does not drop below 28°C.

COMPANIONS

- In general, the happiest snake is the solitary snake.

LIGHTING

- No special lighting is required for these nocturnal animals.
- Despite being crepuscular species (active at dawn and dusk), boas appear to benefit from UVB light.
- A low percentage UV light can be recommended. This will need to be on all day for 8 hours and at an appropriate distance from the snake as recommended by the manufacturer.
- All UVB bulbs should be checked regularly for their UV output and should be changed at least every 10-12 months.

WHAT TO FEED

- Boas are carnivores and their main diet consists of mice pinkies or fuzzies for hatchlings. As the snake grows, so will the frequency and amount of food given and an increase in prey size, from pinkie mice to larger prey such as adult mice should be made. Most snakes prefer live feed as part of their hunting instinct. If frozen food is preferred, it should be defrosted and warmed to blood temperature 37°C prior to feeding. Handling should be avoided after feeding as to prevent the snakes from regurgitating.
- For Sand Boas, you must make sure the thawed rodent is not damp as sand will stick on it and the boa will eat the sand. Most Sand Boa keepers feed their boas in a small paper bag or in a plastic dish and then return it to their enclosure. This prevents the boa from eating sand and causing an impaction which can be potentially life-threatening.
- Water should always be available, and a container is required which will allow the snake to submerge completely. This should be changed daily.

SALMONELLA

- All reptiles can potentially carry Salmonella.
- However, it is rarely a cause of illness in reptiles and treatment is not required.
- It can be transmitted to people (especially young children or those who are immuno-compromised) so good hygiene after handling the reptile is important. Generally washing your hands in soap is sufficient. There are commercially available disinfectants that can be used as an alternative.

ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

We recommend annual health checks every year for pet reptiles as medical problems are more easily treated if detected at an early stage.