

CALIFORNIA KING SNAKE

- Some subspecies utilize a natural defense of mimicking the appearance of the venomous coral snakes, with bands of red, black and yellow.
- Adults are often in excess of 4 feet, sometimes exceeding 6 feet in length, with a lifespan in captivity exceeding 15 years.
- King snakes can be found from southern parts of Canada, throughout the US, and in Central and parts of South America.

Diet

Your king snake will eat one to two mice a week. You can tell whether your snake is hungry by watching its movements. A snake will emerge from its hiding spot to prowl its territory in search of food. When you see your snake begin to move, it is probably time to remove him from the cage to a separate feeding container with one or two appropriately sized thawed mice.

A dish of fresh water should be available at all times.

Housing

The California king snake is essentially terrestrial; an average sized specimen requires a minimum tank size of 20 gallons.

These are secretive and solitary animals that should be housed individually. They can be aggressive toward other snakes and some will be more than happy to make a meal of a smaller snake.

The tank should be furnished with furniture such as corkbark or other hiding spots. Be sure no furniture can shift or topple and injure your snake. There should be a hiding spot in both the heated and cooler sections of the tank. A soil or bark based substrate should be used for bedding.

Temperatures should be between 82 - 88° F during the day and 75 - 80°F at night. Heat only one end of the tank to provide a thermal gradient.

Handling & Care

California king snakes are hardy, reasonably gentle, but difficult to hold. By gently lifting your king snake several times daily, it may become accustomed to being handled. Handling these nervous snakes soon after they eat may cause them to regurgitate their meal. This is especially true if that meal was large. Do not lift the snakes for a few days after they have eaten. Baby king snakes and those preparing to shed may strike or bite.

Spot cleaning by removing feces once a week will ensure a healthy, clean environment but bedding should be thrown away and the entire cage and decorations wiped clean once every month to two months.

Wash your hands with anti-bacterial soap after handling any animal.

Health

Mouth rot (infectious stomatitis) can occur if a snake's teeth are broken, the mouth lining is injured, or if a struggling rodent being constricted bites the snake.

Respiratory distress can occur if the cage temperature changes radically or if humidity is high and the cage is damp.

King snakes are quite susceptible to blister disease. This can occur if the cage substrate is too wet, and especially if the cage is both wet and dirty.



KING SNAKE CHECKLIST

- 20 Gallon Tank
- Screen Top
- Cage Clips
- Water Dish
- Frozen Mice
- Hiding Places
- Decor
- Heat Source
- Substrate
- Thermometers (2)
- Hygrometer
- Transport container
- King Snake Book