

# UnBOA-lievable Morphs

Specializing In High End Boa Morphs

## Care Sheet

**Scientific Name:** Boa Constrictor

**Common Name:** Boa Constrictor, Boa

**Average Lifespan:** 25-30 Years

**Adult Size:** 7-11 foot

**Origin:** North, Central, and South  
America



### Description

The Boa constrictor is a large, heavy-bodied species of snake. It is a member of the family Boidae found in North, Central, and South America. Generally boas exhibit saddle like patterns running the length of the body to a red tail.

Coloration can vary from grey's to browns with younger snakes being lighter in colour than adults its color pattern is highly variable yet distinctive varying from grays to browns with the younger snakes being allot lighter than the adults.

### Behaviour

Generally non-aggressive. Neonates can be a bit nippy, but will usually calm with regular handling sessions. Adults tend to be quite docile, but, there are some exceptions. Most will remain docile, as long as their conditions are kept perfect and they are handled regularly.

### Housing

#### *Size*

Being large stocky snakes it is important to adhere to "length should be half that of the snakes and the width should be a third of the snake's length," rule of thumb (i.e. for an 8ft individual its enclosure should measure approximately 4ft

x 2ft). Height is not of too much concern with Boa Constrictors. When they're younger they will climb if they have the option, however as they get older their size and build makes this a rather less common venture. As a general metric, a fully grown Boa Constrictor should be absolutely fine in a tank 2ft in height. One of the most important features of any enclosure is that it is big enough to allow the snake to thermo-regulate. That is to say, it must be both big enough for a gradient to exist and also big enough for the animal to get its whole body in the area of different temperature.

### *Type*

It is my opinion that aquarium type glass enclosures are a poor enclosure choice for a Boa Constrictor as it can be extremely difficult to maintain proper heat and humidity levels in them. A wooden vivarium, or commercially constructed plastic type cage/racking system is a much better option as they tend to hold heat and humidity well, without a lot of extra effort.

### *Furnishings*

A hide box on both the warm and cool side of the enclosure so the snake is never forced to make a choice between temperature and security. A rough object should also be placed in the enclosure to aid with shedding. Some artificial plants and decor can also be added to be aesthetically pleasing. A securely attached climbing branch should be offered for young Boa Constrictors, this is not necessary for adult specimens as they are mostly terrestrial. A water bowl with fresh clean water, preferably large enough for the snake to completely submerge itself in should be placed on the cool side of the enclosure. The water should be changed daily and the bowl to be fully washed at least once a week.

### *Maintenance*

The enclosure should have a comprehensive clean out once a month. This includes disinfecting all items, changing substrate etc. Depending on your substrate you may do this more often. Additionally the water should be changed daily and the bowl to be fully washed at least once a week. Spot cleaning should be done as often as possible (at least every 2-3 days).

### *Substrate*

There are lots of different substrates out there to choose from which you can use. These include Newspaper, Kitchen Roll, Aspen Bedding, Cypress Mulch and Coco Bedding these are all safe choices so long as they remain dry. Avoid Corn

husk, Pine & Cedar shavings as they release aromatic phenolic oils which are toxic to snakes.

## **Food**

Boa Constrictors should be fed pre killed or frozen thawed mice, rats or in some cases small rabbits. Neonates can be started on mice or rat pinks from birth. For the first year of life, 1 rat that is as thick as the thickest body girth of the snake should be fed, once every 7-10 days. For the second Year of life, one appropriately sized rat should be fed every 10- 14 days. Adults may be fed every 14-21 days. Rabbits may also be offered as adults. Vitamin and mineral supplements are not required. Boa Constrictors should not be handled for at least 48 hours after feeding. Handling too early after feeding may cause the snake to regurgitate.

## **Temperature and Humidity**

### *Temperature*

Boa Constrictors should be offered a warm and cool side of the enclosure so they may thermo regulate to their desired temperature at any time as they are cold blooded. The warm end temperature should be 86-90f And the cool end temperature around 79-83f. A night time temperature drop is not necessary. Temperatures should not exceed 90f or fall below 75f at any time.

### *Humidity*

Humidity levels should remain at 50-60% at all times. Humidity can be raised into the 70% range to aid in shedding, but, should not be kept at these high levels for more than a week at a time. If you are having problems with humidity to low try adding a water dish to the warm end of the enclosure or mist daily.

## **Equipment**

### *Heating*

I prefer under tank heat mats or heat cable controlled by a digital thermostat in order to ensure correct temperatures at all times. I also use a room heater to ensure proper ambient air temperatures. A digital thermometer/hydrometer

should be used for ensuring the enclosure temperatures are correct. A temp gun can also come in very handy for spot checking temps in certain areas.

### *Lighting*

Daytime lighting from a room's window is all that is necessary for Boa Constrictors as they do not require UV lighting of any kind. Cage lighting is really down to the choice of the keeper.

LEDs, Strip Lights, etc can all be added for additional light but please remember if you are using a bulb that will get hot make sure it has a guard so the snake cannot burn its self at all.

### **Shedding**

A Boa Constrictor typically sheds its skin about every 6-8 weeks (more frequently as juveniles). Signs to look for to indicate an impending shed are as follows... First the snakes belly tends to turn pinkish and the tail area starts to get rather dull in color. Next the overall color of the snake will get dull and the eyes will go cloudy and bluish, or even white. A few days later, the snake's eyes will clear and the snake will start to return to its normal color. The actual shedding of the skin occurs 3-5 days after the eyes have cleared. Please note that Snakes may go off their food during times of shed this is normal and nothing to worry about. During their shed cycle they may show a little aggression due to their vision being reduced.

### **Sexing**

Neonates may be "popped"(hemipenes exposed through inverting in male specimens) others should be sexed by way of moist stainless steel sexing probes, which are inserted into the sides of the cloaca. These procedures should only be performed by an experienced herpeticulturist, breeder, or Veterinarian, as severe injury to the snake can occur if performed improperly.