



SPOTTED PYTHON CARE

OVERVIEW

The spotted python (*Antaresia maculosa*) is a small python that is native to coastal Queensland, Australia. In nature it is most commonly found among rock piles on hillsides or outcrops with crevices and caves. It is the largest member of a genus that also includes Children's, Stimson's and pygmy (anthill) pythons. Adults typically are 3 to 3 ½ feet in length, with large specimens reaching 4 feet or more and a weight of 2-3 pounds. The spotted python is a very hardy pet suitable for beginning snake keepers. The lifespan may exceed 15-20 years.

DIET

In nature spotted pythons feed largely on rodents and bats. Captive spotted python hatchlings typically accept one or two day old pinkie mice and feed well on appropriately sized rodents throughout their lives. A meal that is 1-1.5 times the diameter of the snake's girth at mid length is appropriate and should be offered every 7-10 days. It usually is not difficult to switch them to defrosted (thawed from frozen) mice. Large adults will eat weanling rats.

WATER

Fresh water should be available at all times in a small non-porous dish that cannot easily be tipped over.

SUBSTRATE

Many keepers use newspaper or Kraft paper to line the bottom of the enclosure. Aspen snake bedding is also a popular choice.

HOUSING

Young spotted pythons can be kept in plastic shoeboxes or storage containers and even adults can be kept in larger models that give a few square feet of floor space. Aquariums or other snake cages can also be used as long as they are not too large. Any snake cage should provide security and include a



couple of hiding places where they can seek a dark retreat. Heat mats or tape regulated by a thermostat (rheostat) should provide heat in a manner that will result in a thermal gradient so the snake can thermoregulate. In some enclosures an infrared heat bulb may be a better choice or may be needed as a supplemental heat source during colder weather. The snake is likely to find comfort at 84-87°F. A good range is 80°F at the cool end of the cage and 92-94°F at the warm end. The temperature can drop 6-8° at night.

NOTE

For more extensive information on spotted python care see <http://www.dolittlefarm.com.au/docs/spotted.pdf>.