

ANIMAL INFORMATION SHEET

Common Name – Rhinoceros Rat Snake
Scientific Name – Rhynchophis boulengeri

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Serpentes

Family: Colubrinae



Care, feeding and handling guidelines are outlined by the Association of Zoo and Aquariums, US Fish and Wildlife and the United States Department of Agriculture.

General Information:

Size: 3-5' feet, well cared for animals have reached well over 4' feet.

Lifespan: 20+ years

Wild Habitat: subtropical rainforests at elevations between 980 and 3,610', particularly valleys with streams. The hatchling and young spend a great deal of time in the water due to camouflage.

Diet: Carnivorous: mice, small rats, birds, and lizards, in captivity pre-killed mice.

Indigenous Habitat: northern Vietnam including Tam Dao, and in southern China. During a 2001 survey, 10 specimens observed in Yên Bái Province, northern Vietnam. Listed as a species of concern due to habitat loss. There is little to no data on the species either wild or in captivity, with their unusual shaped and coloration they resemble a leafy vine.

Home Habitat: adults should be housed in aquarium 35 gallons or larger, bio-active tank should paired with heat source that can hold a basking temperature of 80° F is required and a cooler side is important also. A humidity index of at least 85% in the form of fogger or mister. Tank should include water dish of ample size for snake to be able to submerge to ease in shedding. Different things in the cage like, rocks, plants, will allow your snake to exhibit more behaviors. Reptile enrichment can be very difficult, all items brought in tank from “wild” should be frozen at least a 48 hours to prevent mite contamination. They are arboreal, so branches and limbs are a MUST.

Recommended max time for handling: 30 minutes

Temperature Range: 68° F – 95° F (Higher temperatures reduce time animal should be available for “touching” or being handled.

Transport: medium cooler with locking lid lined with newspaper in a snake bag with paper and a crate cover to decrease stress for transporting to/from veterinarian or any other location. <60° F hot water bottle wrapped in towel MUST be placed in container.

Restraint: Rhino Rat Snakes are calm animals, so just support their bodies until they feel comfortable and relax. They will naturally coil around your hand, wrist and arm.

Handling: Can be a great candidate for handling, tend to be calm and don't mind being handled

Signs of Stress: Hissing, striking and biting, attempting to escape

Vocalization: Hissing



Interesting Facts: Rhino Rat Snakes are unusual, and difficult to obtain. Rarely smuggled this species is found in small numbers in the pet trade, with little or no data available. In October 2014 China banned the purchase of live animals for pet trade as the exotic pet craze poses threat to China's local ecosystems. Fines are severe and those caught go on a permanent watch list. Once a larger facility is established “Penelope” will be placed in a Species Survival Program (SSP).

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1. Tidewater Reptile Association at <http://www.freewebs.com/tidewaterreptileassociation/>
2. Central Virginia Reptile Rescue at <http://carmendenali79.wix.com/centralvareptilerescue>
3. For questions or concerns you may have about your pets or where to adopt contact The Bunny Hutch at Info@TheBunnyHutch.ORG or call (866) 488-4248.