



Pacific Ground Boa (*Candoia carinata*)

Solomon Island Ground Boa (*Candoia paulsoni*)

Variable, Bevel Nosed Boas

Also known by several other common and vernacular names, including the keeled scaled boas and bevel nosed boas, the Pacific and Solomon Island ground boas are relatively small, yet highly variable species of terrestrial to semi-arboreal, old world boas in terms of their colors and appearances. Two species are also recognized; *Candoia carinata* (the nominate species), and *Candoia paulsoni*. This is small, slender to moderate bodied boa species with a relatively flat, triangular, wedge shaped head and slightly upturned snout. Ground color can vary considerably with darker alternating rectangular dorsal and lateral blotches or irregular dorsal stripe on a light to dark brown, yellowish, reddish orange, grayish, blackish, olive, to olive brown ground color. The belly, or ventral surface can range from whitish, tan, or cream colored to reddish orange. *Candoia* are a highly variable genus of snakes, and they may also be striped, blotched, banded, or solid colored.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Serpentes

Infraorder: Alethinophidia

Family: Boidae

Subfamily: Boinae

Genus: *Candoia*

Species: *Candoia carinata** and *Candoia paulsoni**

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

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If provided the proper care, Pacific and Solomon Island ground boas can attain longevity of at least 15 to 25 years or more in captivity under the correct care.

Distribution and Habitat

Pacific and Solomon Island ground boas are a nocturnal to crepuscular, terrestrial species indigenous to tropical to sub-tropical forests, woodlands, grasslands, savannahs, shrubby areas, agricultural, and human habitations of Indonesia, New Guinea, and the Bismarck Archipelago.

Conservation Status

Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD). Closely related species are IUCN Least Concern (LC), however.

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Most adult Pacific and Solomon Island ground boas range from 1 ½ to 2 feet, or 18 to 24 inches, with specimens up to 5 feet, or 54 inches being exceptionally large.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed, secure, and escape proof. These boas can be housed in a 10 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult Pacific ground boas should be housed in a minimum of a 20 to 30 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. Pacific ground boas are primarily terrestrial, and floor space is more important than height. Provide a substrate that can enable burrowing or hiding such as fine aspen shavings, orchid bark, or play sand mixtures. Do not use pine or cedar shavings, as these substrates are toxic to snakes. Provide additional basking and hiding opportunities using live or artificial foliage, rocks, logs, driftwood, or other hides. Also be sure to include a sturdy water bowl or dish as well.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized UTH (or tank heating pad), ceramic or radiant heat emitter, or incandescent, UVA/UVB, or other heat producing bulb. Ideal temperatures for Pacific ground boas range from 75 to 82 degrees F on the cool side and 85 to 92 degrees F on the warm side. Most species of snakes have fairly simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. Also be sure to spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least once per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2 to 3 months. Maintain at 50 to 80% humidity with occasional misting. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Carnivorous; In the wild, Pacific boas are carnivorous, and will prey upon rodents and other small mammals, small birds, amphibians, smaller reptiles, and other smaller vertebrates. In captivity, Pacific boas can be given feeder rodents of appropriate size, such as rats or mice, although many may prefer lizards or frogs initially. In most general circumstances, it is recommended to provide humanely pre-killed rodents acquired from a reputable source, as offering live rodents to any snake can carry risk of serious injury or even death to your snake

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when the rodent bites to defend itself or otherwise gnaws on your animal. A general rule of thumb when selecting feeder rodent sizes for your snake is to provide prey items that are approximately the same width as the snake's widest point. It should also be noted that many snakes may refuse food for longer periods of time over several weeks or months, especially in the fall and winter months or if several other husbandry conditions are not being met. While this can be alarming to new pet owners, it is oftentimes normal, but their overall health and weight should be monitored during these times to make sure they do not lose weight or otherwise deteriorate. Most snakes typically are fed whole prey items, and do not usually require additional calcium or vitamin D3 supplementation unless otherwise directed. Their feeding frequency will also depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed them, as obesity and other health related issues can become an issue. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

As with many snakes, young and juvenile Candoia boas may initially be more nervous and defensive. Handle your Pacific or Solomon Island ground boa gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal. As adults, most will calm down, although some can remain somewhat nippy and prone to biting, but even these specimens can be readily handled without much difficulty by the intermediate level reptile owner or keeper. These boas were a formerly commonly imported species, although their numbers and availability have declined in recent years due to increased importation restrictions among their natural ranges. Imported animals, and to a lesser degree, captive born animals, are still available though.

Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility.

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