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Timor Python (*Python timoriensis*)

Freckled Indonesians

Also sometimes known as the Lesser Sundas python, the Timor python is a medium sized, terrestrial to semi-arboreal python with unique coloration and appearances indigenous to southeastern Asia and Indonesia. This species is a medium sized, medium bodied species of python with heads wider than their necks, and a light to dark brown, olive brown, to yellowish-brown ground color with numerous, darker irregular freckling and dorsal blotches or markings, grading into a uniformly or less vividly patterned fashion about two thirds of their bodies down towards the tail and posterior third of the animal. The undersides of their chins, neck, and throat are pale yellow or cream colored grading into a darker ventral surface posteriorly, and the irises are usually silver in this species. As with many python species, Timor pythons are ambush predators of small to large mammals, birds, and reptiles, where they seek refuge in burrows, caves, or rocky crevices.

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: Pythonidae

Genus: Python

Species: *Python timoriensis**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, Timor pythons can attain longevity of 20 to 25 years or more. Up to 35 to 40 years is also not uncommon.

Distribution and Habitat

Timor pythons are a medium sized python species indigenous to the upland grasslands and savannahs to forests and woodlands of Indonesia and its Lesser Sundas Islands of Southeastern Asia.

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Conservation Status

Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD).

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Timor pythons range from 15 to 20 inches as hatchlings. Adult Timor pythons average between 5 and 7 feet, or about 60 to 84 inches, with a maximum recorded size of around 9 feet, or 108 inches.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed, well ventilated, and escape proof. Hatchling Timor pythons can be started out in a 20 gallon long terrarium or similar sized enclosure, but will soon require larger accommodations. If glass enclosures are used at any point, be sure that the enclosure retains sufficient humidity. Many of the commercially made plastic or fiberglass enclosures, or otherwise custom-designed enclosures that can retain heat and humidity well are perhaps the best and most practical enclosures to use to house mid to large sized boas and pythons. Depending on the age and size of the animal, a four to six foot by two foot enclosure or larger is required. These pythons can be maintained on a substrate of cage liner material, cypress mulch, or sphagnum fir mixtures, but always ensure that the substrate does not become too damp or moist. Do not use pine or cedar shavings, as these substrates are toxic to snakes. Timor pythons will also require a large sturdy water dish or tub that must be cleaned, sanitized, and changed regularly, especially if dirtied. Providing an adequately sized hidebox, artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, logs, and other cage furnishings can also provide additional hiding and basking opportunities. Timor pythons will climb if given the opportunity, but floor space is more important than height.

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 Timor pythons range from 75 to 82 degrees F on the cool side and 86 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. 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, Timor pythons are carnivorous, and will prey upon a wide range of small mammals, birds, amphibians, and other reptiles that they can ambush, locate, and consume. In captivity, these pythons can be given feeder rodents of appropriate size, such as rats or mice. In most general circumstances, it is recommended to provide humanely pre-killed prey animals acquired from a reputable source, as offering live animals to any snake can carry risk of serious injury or even death to your snake when the prey item bites to defend itself or otherwise gnaws on your animal. A general rule of thumb when selecting feeder prey item sizes for your snake is to provide prey items that are approximately the same width as the snake's widest point. It

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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 these things can be alarming, 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, hatchling and juvenile Timor pythons are often initially more nervous and nippy. It is important to always handle them gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal. These pythons may initially be defensive and prone to biting. However, if they are handled and worked with regularly, Timor pythons can settle down considerably and can make for very active, agile, and attractive species to maintain. Timor pythons are not the most suitable python for beginners due to their potential adult size, disposition, and strong feeding response, but for the adequately experienced and prepared intermediate to advanced reptile keeper, these pythons often make fine additions to most any reptile collection.

****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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