



Yellow Anaconda *Eunectes notaeus*

- Yellow anacondas are a large, heavy bodied aquatic to semi aquatic boa species indigenous to the swamps, riverways, and flooded wetlands of South America (including Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay).
- A heavy bodied snake with a yellow, brownish yellow, to olive yellow ground color with a pattern of larger and darker dorsal saddles, blotches, and streaks. Several dark stripes radiate from the head, and the eyes are fairly high set.
- Yellow anacondas are largely aquatic to semi aquatic ambush predators, using the water to support their weight.
- If provided the proper care, yellow anacondas can attain longevity of 20-25 years or more.

Size

Ranges from 18-24 inches as neonates. Adult yellow anacondas are smaller than their Green anaconda cousins, and usually range from 9 to 12 feet. They are still not for beginners, and the potential size of this species should be considered prior to obtaining one.

Housing

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Juvenile yellow anacondas can be housed in a 20-30 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adults should be housed in a minimum of a 4' to 6' by 2 1/2' enclosure. Yellow anacondas can be maintained on a substrate of newspaper, cage liner material, or cypress mulch. Do not use pine or cedar shavings, as these substrates are toxic to snakes. Being largely semi aquatic, anacondas will require a large sturdy water dish or tub they can readily enter and exit, and that must be cleaned, sanitized, and changed frequently and regularly. Providing an adequately sized hidebox in the enclosure should also be included. Artificial foliage, driftwood, and other cage furnishings can also provide additional security.

Create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter. Overhead, incandescent lighting can also be used, but is not required for anacondas (which are primarily nocturnal). Ideal temperatures for a yellow anaconda range from 78-80 degrees F on the cool side/ambient temperature and 86-92 degrees F on the warm side. Providing adequate humidity is also important in maintaining anacondas. Yellows are more tolerant of lower humidity levels than green anacondas, but still require at least 50-60% humidity. Using the correct substrate, as well as providing a humid hide box with sphagnum moss will help maintain desired humidity levels. Overall, the enclosure should be maintained at humid levels but not be wet or moist since this leads to other health related implications.

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 2-3 months.

Feeding/Diet

In the wild, yellow anacondas are carnivorous, and will prey upon a variety of animals including rodents and other small to medium sized mammals, fish, birds, and lizards.

Most juvenile yellow anacondas are large enough to be started off on rat pups once per 5-7 days. Food items can gradually be increased as needed. Most adult anacondas can be fed medium to large adult rats or rabbits once every 14 days (or bi weekly). Some yellow anacondas may initially be finicky feeders, and may require other food items such as pre-killed mice or

chicks, or more opportunities to feel secure using additional feeding methods generally accepted for snakes more reluctant to eat. Overall, a general rule of thumb to follow when feeding snakes is to provide prey items that are approximately the same width as the widest point of the snake.

Handling

Both species of anacondas maintained in captivity (yellow anaconda and the green anaconda) require previous knowledge and experience in handling larger, and/or sometimes aggressive snakes. The origin of the animal chosen (wild caught vs. captive born), as well as the frequency and methods of how they are kept and handled will often determine to a great extent the disposition of anacondas to being handled. Despite their often negative widespread reputation for being nasty or unpredictable, captive bred and born yellow anacondas that are handled regularly from an early age can become traceable and more easily handled. Anacondas certainly are not for everyone (only experienced and responsible individuals), but with the correct husbandry and handling, can make for a rewarding reptile keeping experience for the right individuals.

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