

OVERVIEW						
<p>The rainbow boas of Central and South America are small terrestrial boids get their popular name from their highly iridescent scales. They are smallish snakes, with the common Colombian variety (<i>Epicrates cenchria maurus</i>) averaging four or five feet in length. Rainbow boas require moderately warm temperatures and HIGH HUMIDITY. They are similar to blood pythons (or ball pythons) in care, as they inhabit fairly swampy areas and will not tolerate dryness. A humid retreat (hidebox with damp moss), substrate that retains a bit of moisture (e.g., cypress mulch, fir bark) and daily cage misting are essential to rainbow boa success.</p>						
ENVIRONMENT						
Conditions »	Day Temp	78-84°F	Night Temp	70-78°F	Humidity	75-90%
Heat Source »	Belly heat; thermostat-controlled undertank heat mat at one end of enclosure					
HOUSING		<p>Rainbow boas should be housed individually in secure enclosures. Snakes are escape artists and any housing must prevent even the smallest opportunity for the snake to exit. Clear plastic shoe and sweater boxes are popular for hatchlings, and small plastic terrariums may also be used. An aquarium will also work and a 20-30 gallon long is sufficiently large for an adult.</p> <p>Heat is best provided using a heat tape or mat beneath one end of the enclosure. It should be situated to provide a thermal gradient from the warmer heated end of the housing to the cooler end. Heat sources should always be controlled with a thermostat to prevent overheating. Rainbow boas require slightly lower temperatures than other popular boids like ball pythons, Colombian redtail boas and Burmese pythons. Do not allow temperature to exceed 84°F.</p> <p>A 2" depth of substrate like cypress mulch (Zoo Med Forest Floor) is great for maintaining the necessary high relative humidity and allowing for burrowing behavior. A hide box filled with damp sphagnum (orchid) moss is also essential to keeping these humid environment snakes properly. Fresh water should be available at all times. KEEP HUMIDITY HIGH!</p>				
DIET		<p>Rainbow boas are rodent eaters. Our big babies are eating live small fuzzy mice and prey size should be similar in diameter to the snake's girth. Adults will eat small rats. Most rainbow boas will readily switch to feeding on thawed-frozen rodents.</p>				