

OVERVIEW						
<p>The sand boas of Africa and the Middle East are small terrestrial boids that inhabit arid regions where they use their shovel-shaped snouts to aid them in burrowing into the sandy soils where they remain hidden most of the time. They are small, somewhat heavy-bodied snakes, with the common Kenyan variety (<i>Eryx colubrinus loveridgei</i>) averaging two or three feet in length. Males are more slender and about two feet in length, whereas the females may reach three feet and are comparatively heavy-bodied. These snakes are easy to care for and often thrive in captivity and make docile terrarium pets.</p>						
ENVIRONMENT						
Conditions »	Day Temp	82-94°F	Night Temp	70-78°F	Humidity	30-40%
Heat Source »	Belly heat; thermostat-controlled undertank heat mat at one end of enclosure					
HOUSING		<p>Sand 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 10-15 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 (90-95°F) of the housing to the cooler end (80-85°F). Heat sources should always be controlled with a thermostat to prevent overheating. A nighttime drop as low as 70°F is fine for adults, but babies and young sand boas should be maintained with a 80-94°F gradient both day and night.</p> <p>A 2-3" depth of substrate like shredded recycled paper, shredded aspen or sani-chips allows for burrowing behavior and is superior to sand for a number of reasons. Some keepers offer food in a separate, bare-bottomed feeding enclosure to prevent any substrate ingestion. A hide box may be provided as well, but with adequate and appropriate substrate the snakes will burrow out of sight.</p> <p>Sand boas should be kept dry, but a small, heavy crock of water that cannot be overturned or spilled may be left in the cage or offered several nights each week.</p>				
DIET		<p>Sand boas are rodent eaters. Our babies are eating live small fuzzy mice and prey size should be similar in diameter to the snake's girth. Adults will eat young or adult mice. Most sand boas will readily switch to feeding on thawed-frozen rodents.</p>				