

Red-tailed Boa

Boa constrictor constrictor



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Red-tailed boas require a large area and need consistent interaction with humans to remain tame. Red-tailed boas have clean markings on a pale, silvery background.



Is a Red-tailed boa the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

1. I can accommodate a snake that can grow to eight feet or more
2. I am comfortable handling a snake.
3. I am comfortable feeding live food to a snake.
4. I can commit to providing proper care for this snake.
5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered "Yes" to these statements, a red-tailed boa may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a red-tailed boa and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

Average Size Up to 10 feet long

Life Span 15+ years with proper care

Diet Thawed, appropriate sized, frozen rodents, warmed to room temperature

Feeding Feed most adult snakes every two weeks, or as needed; feed juveniles once or twice a week
Feed in a separate tank so that your snake does not associate your hand or the habitat being opened with feeding

If feeding your snake live rodents, do not leave them unattended. Live rodents can injure the snake, sometimes fatally.

Housing Size – Appropriate size and shape habitat to accommodate normal behaviors and exercise
Substrate – Aspen shavings, mulch-type commercial material; unbleached paper towels, soil, dampened sphagnum moss, and bark; pelleted paper; avoid gravel and artificial turf (too harsh for skin)
Habitat – Provide a hiding area just large enough for your snake to fit inside and a branch or shelf to climb on
Temperature – Temperature gradient (up to 95° F. for the warm end and 78° F. for the cool end); recommend radiant heat; use an incandescent light or ceramic heater as primary heat source, use undertank heat as secondary source
Lighting – Snakes need a photo period light cycle; provide 8–12 hours of light daily; do not leave white light on at all times; to view snakes at night use a black or infrared light
Water – Provide a water bowl of chlorine-free water large enough for the snake to soak in
Do not house different species of reptiles together

Recommended Supplies

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat with secure lid | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer and humidity gauge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate substrate | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiding or retreat area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large water dish | <input type="checkbox"/> Incandescent bulb or ceramic heater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy branch or shelf for climbing | <input type="checkbox"/> Undertank heat source |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book about boas | <input type="checkbox"/> Infrared or black light & light timer |

Red-tailed Boa

Boa constrictor constrictor



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Normal Behavior and Interaction As snake gets ready to shed, eyes will turn a milky blue over the course of a few days and body color will start to dull and develop a whitish sheen

Searches habitat when hungry, appearing alert and even restless; appetite may vary; have heat-sensitive pits bordering their mouths that detect temperature change from prey

Will remain quiet in the hiding area or coiled up for long periods of time; should display an alert demeanor when disturbed.

Boas have tiny back legs, called spurs, which they use when fighting or mating

Habitat Maintenance Clean out water dish and replace water daily; remove any feces daily, or food if not eaten immediately

Thoroughly clean the tank at least once a week: set snake aside in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all smell of bleach; dry the tank and furnishings; and add clean cage carpet

Grooming and Hygiene Snakes will regularly shed their skin; if old pieces of skin remain after shedding, mist the snake and gently rub off the old skin

Always wash your hands before and after touching your snake or habitat contents to help prevent *Salmonella* and other infectious diseases

- Signs of a Healthy Animal**
- Active and alert
 - Clear eyes
 - Healthy skin
 - Eats regularly
 - Regular shedding of skin
 - Sheds skin in one complete piece

Common Health Issues

Health Issue (alpha)	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Dermatitis	Blisters; rapid shedding caused by an unclean habitat or one that is too cold or damp.	Clean the habitat and lower humidity. Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Respiratory Disease, such as colds	Labored breathing. Mucus in mouth or nostrils. Can be caused by a habitat that is too cold or damp.	Keep snake warm and dry. Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Stomatitis	White, cheesy substance in the mouth; loss of teeth and appetite	If untreated, can be fatal. Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Ticks and Mites	Parasites on skin, can transmit diseases.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.

- Red Flags**
- Unusually frequent or infrequent shedding
 - Lethargic or reluctant to eat; weight loss
 - Abnormal feces
 - Difficulty shedding
 - Vomiting
 - Bumps or spots on skin
 - Labored breathing
 - White, cheesy substance in mouth

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.

Sources *Boas and Pythons and other friendly snakes* by John Coborn
Keeping and Breeding Snakes by Chris Mattison
The Proper Care of Snakes by Armin Geus

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.