

African House Snake

Lamprophis fuliginosus



CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

The African house snake is easy to keep. Although also called the “brown house snake,” their colors range from shades of brown to green or even red. They have an iridescence that rivals such snakes as the Rainbow Boa.



Is an African House Snake 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 may grow to six feet.
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, an African house snake may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for an African house snake and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

Average Size 2 to 6 feet long

Life Span Up to 15+ years with proper care

Diet Thawed, appropriate size, 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; also prevents snake from eating indigestible substrate

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 with secure lid, large enough to accommodate normal behaviors and exercise

Substrate – Aspen shavings, mulch-type commercial material; unbleached paper towels, soil, dampened sphagnum moss, and bark; pelleted paper

Habitat – Provide a hiding place, such as cork bark or a hide box, and branches for climbing; maintain humidity of 40% to 60%, higher during shedding

Temperature – Temperature gradient (85° F. for the warm end and 65° F. for the cool end); recommend radiant heat; use an incandescent light or ceramic heater as primary heat source, use undertank heater 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 large dish of fresh, clean, chlorine-free water for drinking and bathing

Do not house different species of reptiles together

Recommended Supplies

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat with secure lid | <input type="checkbox"/> Substrate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer | <input type="checkbox"/> Hide box or driftwood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Misting bottle | <input type="checkbox"/> Water dish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humidity gauge | <input type="checkbox"/> Undertank heat source |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book about African house snakes | <input type="checkbox"/> Incandescent light or ceramic heater |

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Normal Behavior and Interaction

African house snakes are nocturnal; appetite may diminish during winter months
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
Can become tame, but be careful of their long teeth

Habitat Maintenance

Change water daily
Thoroughly clean the tank at least once 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 substrate

Grooming and Hygiene

African house snakes will regularly shed their skin; ensure humidity of habitat is at appropriate level to allow snake to shed properly
Always wash your hands before and after touching your snake or habitat contents to help prevent *Salmonella* and other infectious diseases
To facilitate shedding, provide a large container that allows snake to immerse entire body

Signs of a Healthy Animal

- Clear eyes (except when shedding)
- Clear nose and mouth
- Body is rounded and full
- Active and alert
- Eats regularly
- Healthy skin

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.
Stomatitis	White, cheesy substance in the mouth; loss of teeth and appetite	If untreated, can be fatal. Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Respiratory Disease	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.
Ticks and Mites	Parasites on skin, can cause disease.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.

Red Flags

- Wrinkled or rubbed skin
- Discharge in nose or mouth
- Abnormal feces or urine
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Decreased appetite

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

Sources

Keeping and Breeding Snakes by Chris Mattison
Perfect Pets: Snakes by Susan Schafer
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.