



Lone Mountain

••• ANIMAL HOSPITAL •••



Introduction to Ball Pythons

Housing

Young ball pythons less than 2ft long can comfortably be housed in an enclosure that is 30in x 12in x 12in, while larger ball pythons should be housed in enclosures that measure at least 36in x 18in x 18in. Provide secure locking lids and doors in all enclosures since ball pythons are known to escape their caging

Provide hiding spots on both the warm and cool ends of the enclosure to provide visual security

A large, sturdy water dish should be available at all times to permit snake submerging in it

Bedding can be any of the following: compressed coconut fibers, natural wood chips (avoid cedar and pine chips), reptile carpet, and AstroTurf

Handling and Ease of Care

One of the most easily handled snakes, and are recommended for beginning hobbyist. Rarely strike if handled regularly and consistently while still young

Make great, low maintenance pets if their basic requirements are met

Excerpts from HYPERLINK "<http://www.kingsnake.com/ballpythonguide>" www.kingsnake.com/ballpythonguide. Edited by Dana Rocco, Veterinary Assistant, and reviewed by Stephanie Lamb, DVM South Wilton Veterinary Group, and Darius Starks, DVM Lone Mountain Animal Hospital

Description

Ball Pythons (*Python Regius*) are small to medium snakes that are native to open grassland and scrub forests in Central and Western Africa

Named after their tendency to retreat into a 'ball' when frightened

One of the most common and popular snakes in the hobby, and have been bred in several different morphs

Sexing

Difficult to sex- females tend to be much larger than males

Sex determination by probing is the only reliable way to determine sex- probes easily passes to 5-6 subcaudal scales in males and females only 2-3. Probing is only recommended to performed by a veterinarian

Males will evert their hemipenes when manually expressed, but this is not recommended because it can lead to prolapse

Size

Large females can reach lengths of 6 ft in length; average lengths are 3-4.5 ft
Typically weigh 800-1500 g

Diet

Notoriously finicky and inconsistent eaters, particularly during the winter months

Feed young ball pythons a prey item not more than twice the diameter of the thickest portion of its body every 7-10 days

Feed mature ball pythons every 10-14 days. Some hobbyist only feed large prey items once a month

Offer freshly killed or frozen prey of appropriate size such as rats, mice or other small mammals

Temperature

Rely on the outside temperatures to regulate their own body temperature

Ensure ambient temperatures of 75-85 °F with a basking spot of around 95 °F

Temperatures should never drop below 70°F

Two thermometers should be used to monitor temperatures

Lighting

Nocturnal and do not require access to ultraviolet B (UVB) rays to metabolize Vitamin D3 and Calcium

Lighting is largely for viewing of ball pythons and is not required

Humidity

Thrive best at humidity levels of 60-70%

Improper humidity will lead to chronic poor sheds and possible respiratory infections

Maintain humidity by misting the enclosure several times per day and appropriate bedding like compressed coconut fiber and wood bark bedding

Measure humidity levels with a hygrometer

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