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## Red-Tail Boa, Common Boa, Central American Boa etc...

*Boa Constrictor*

**Lifespan:** 20-30+ years.

**Size:** Adults can reach 6 to 12 feet in length;  
 depending on species and sex

**Sexing:** There are different methods of sexing snakes: comparing tail lengths, popping and probing. An experienced veterinarian or breeder should do popping or probing.

**Enclosure:** Boas do best in a longer tank that provides them with room to roam around and exercise. At the least, the tank should be 4x2x2' or a 6x4x2' depending on species. Bigger is always better. Babies can be started off in much smaller tanks. A lock is required to prevent your snake from escaping.

***Pisces recommends: ExoTerra All-Glass Terrarium and EcoFlex PVC Reptile Lounges.***

**Hiding/Climbing Spots:** One or multiple snake caves or other hiding spot is recommended. Provide a water dish large enough for the snake to curl its entire body into for bathing and to help with shedding.

**Humidity:** The enclosure should be well ventilated and misted well to keep the humidity high (65% to 80%) and to aid the process of shedding and prevent health problems. A moss hide helps maintain an area with high humidity for when the snake is shedding. A water bowl should be big enough for them to curl up in. Use a hygrometer to maintain a constant humidity level.

**Substrate:** Paper towel is the least expensive and most convenient substrate for juveniles, but will not hold humidity for long and will need to be replaced often. Mulch designed for snakes and terrarium soils are best to maintain a high humidity and make it easier to add moss to the tank. Boas will also bury themselves in the soil to aid in shedding. ***Pisces recommends: Zoomed Forest Floor and Reptisoil mix and Terrarium Mosses.***

**Heat:** Maintain a temperature of as low as 22-24°C at night to as high as 27-30°C during the day (83 °F to 85 °F, with a hot spot of about 90°F). Snakes cannot sustain all bodily functions if kept at a constant temperature. Use a heat bulb on one portion of the tank so the snake can escape the warm area if they need to. ***Pisces recommends: ExoTerra and Arcadia bulbs and fixtures.***

**UV Lighting:** Use of a full spectrum T5 bulb is not necessary but there can be benefit to having a T5 for 8-10 hours. UVB bulbs lose effectiveness and need to be replaced every 6-10 months.

**Pisces Recommends: Arcadia T5 Pro 6% Kit**

**Feeding:** Feed juveniles about once a week depending on the age of the snake and the size of the meal. Snakes will normally eat live prey, but in captivity can eat frozen food which is easier to get. If you wish to feed frozen be sure that the food is thoroughly thawed before offering it to your snake. Feed prey approximately the maximum girth of the snake.

**Other:** Boas are readily available in many different color morphs.

**Handling:** When handling a baby or juvenile Boa, it is best to pick them up confidently and slowly. To them, you are a much larger predator and if you hesitate or are nervous, it will induce fear in the snake. These are one of the more docile snakes and are calmer than most snakes but can still behave badly when they feel threatened (biting, striking). If this happens when you are handling your snake, put it back in its tank. Snakes can be head shy so avoid touching its head until you know it's comfortable.

**Safe Handling of Reptiles\*:** As with all living creatures, reptiles can carry microorganisms (including Salmonella) which can make people ill. To reduce the chances of infection, always follow these safe handling steps:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your pet, its food and anything it has touched.
- Keep your pet in a habitat designed for it; do not let your pet reptile roam around the home without proper supervision.
- Keep your pet, its food dishes and cage components out of the kitchen.
- Don't nuzzle or kiss your pet.
- Infants, children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with a compromised immune system have a greater risk of infection. Extra caution should be taken when they are in contact with any animal. Children under 5 should handle reptiles only under adult/parent supervision.

**Your New Pet:** It is the responsibility of any pet owner to provide their pet with regular veterinary care to maintain their pet's health and to prevent illness. Should you experience any problems with your new pet, contact Pisces Pet Emporium. We will make every effort to assist you, but we may refer you to a qualified veterinarian if the problem is beyond our ability to treat. A pet is a large responsibility and should not be purchased without due consideration. Pets should never be released into the wild.

### **Pisces Recommended Setup:**

- ❑ Glass/PVC terrarium (Exo Terra Large Low 36x18x12 or ExoFlex Reptile Lounge 4x2x2' are recommended)
- ❑ Exo Terra large to XL hides
- ❑ Exo Terra Misting bottle or MistKing system to maintain humidity. Live plants can also be used
- ❑ Large Exo Terra Water dish (big enough to soak)
- ❑ Exo Terra artificial hanging plants and Komodo Jungle Canopy plants can be used for enrichment and foliage
- ❑ Zoomed Forest Floor, Exo Terra plantation soil make great substrates. Add enough to allow the snake to dig and burrow
- ❑ Exo Terra or Jurassic Terrarium moss to maintain humidity levels
- ❑ Exo Terra 150 Intense Basking Spot Lamp & Flukers 8.5in Dimmable Deluxe Clamp Lamp Fixture
- ❑ Exo Terra medium-large under tank heat mat & Exo Terra 100-300watt electronic thermostat to maintain hot spot temperature
- ❑ Arcadia T5 Pro D3+ UVB Kit (if provided)
- ❑ Feeder Mice/rats
- ❑ Exo Terra digital thermometer, hydrometer or combometer
- ❑ Exo Terra metal feeding tongs

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*\*Safe handling information courtesy of PIJAC Canada*