

BRAZILIAN RAINBOW BOA

updated March 2017



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Range | Lower Central America, east South America |
| Habitat | Preferred habitat includes rivers, streams, lakes and swamps |
| Diet (wild) | Warm-blooded vertebrates |
| Diet (captive) | Dead rodents |
| Description | Length: 3–6½ feet. In sunlight, it has a multicolored iridescent sheen. Its color ranges from red to orange to mahogany brown with a dark ring pattern down the dorsal surface and dark spots along the sides. |
| Lifespan | Up to 20 years |
| Reproduction | Females are ovoviviparous: young develop in eggs the female retains inside her body. The eggs have an incubation period of 8–12 weeks and each clutch will yield 2–35 live young. They reach sexual maturity at 2–4 years of age. |
| Behavior | Brazilian rainbow boas are shy and nocturnal. Boas are considered primitive snakes; they have vestigial limbs that appear as spurs on either side of the cloaca. Adult males have substantially larger spurs along the side of the cloaca and also have noticeably thicker bases of their tails due to their hemipenes. |
| Our animals | 1 female, 1 male. Born: 01/2004 (male); 01/2004 (female) |
| Cool stuff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventional wisdom held that pythons, anacondas, and boas suffocate their prey. Actually, these predators cut off their victims' blood supply to their major organs. When a boa tightens its powerful body around its prey, the snake cuts off its victim's circulation, causing the prey to pass out within a matter of seconds (most animals can actually survive a relatively long time without breathing.) Once blood flow ceases, organs with high metabolic rates, such as the brain, liver, and heart, begin to immediately shut down (doctors call this ischemia). Death follows within seconds. • Rainbow boas have heat-sensing pits on their face that allow them to detect the body heat of their warm-blooded prey at night. • Rainbow boas are so named because of the iridescent sheen imparted by microscopic ridges on their scales, which act like prisms to refract light into rainbows. |

Phylum
ChordataClass
ReptiliaOrder
SquamataFamily
BoidaeGenus
Epicratesspecies
E. cenchria