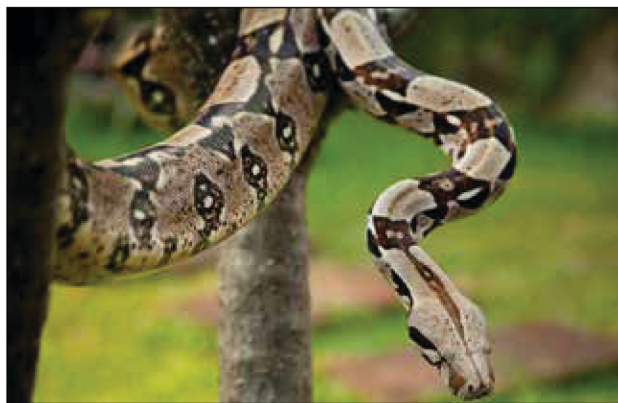


## RED-TAILED BOA CONSTRICTOR

updated March 2017



<b>Range</b>	Central Mexico, Central America, and northern and central South America.
<b>Habitat</b>	Tropical rain forest is preferred, but also found in semiarid savanna
<b>Diet (wild)</b>	Mostly small mammals (rodents, monkeys, bats) and birds; will eat any animal they can capture and fit in their mouths
<b>Diet (captive)</b>	Dead guinea pig offered weekly
<b>Description</b>	Length: 4–9 feet; weight: 30 pounds. Color is cream or brown, marked with dark “saddle-shaped” bands. These saddles become more colorful and prominent towards the tail, often becoming reddish brown with either black or cream edging. Females are usually larger than males.
<b>Lifespan</b>	20–30 years
<b>Reproduction</b>	Females are ovoviparous (produce eggs inside their body, then give “birth” to live young when the eggs hatch); 20–60 young are born after a gestation period of 4–7 months (depending on local temperatures). No parental care provided. Boa constrictors are primitive snakes with vestigial pelvic girdles and hind limbs that are represented externally as a pair of spurs next to the cloaca. Spurs are usually more developed in males and are utilized during courtship and copulation. Breeding occurs during rainy season and females are capable of sperm storage up to two years.
<b>Behavior</b>	Red-tailed boas are common as pets with a non-aggressive temperament. Red-tailed boas are arboreal as youngsters and primarily terrestrial as adults. They are able to consume prey up to twice the diameter of their head because of loosely hinged jaws. Boas have over 200 backward-curved teeth. Special permits are required for the import/export of red-tailed boas. Their numbers in the wild are declining because of habitat destruction. Although protected, many skins are still sold to the leather trade each year.
<b>Our animals</b>	1 male. Born: 2008 in captivity
<b>Cool stuff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPZ's snake, a red-tailed boa, is a subspecies of the common boa constrictor (<i>B. constrictor</i>). At least nine subspecies are currently recognized.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Although heat-sensing pits are common in the family Boidae, they are <b>absent</b> in <i>B. constrictor</i>.</li> <li>• Males possess hemipenes, a double-penis, of which only one side is commonly used in mating.</li> <li>• Like most snakes, boa constrictors rely on strong vomeronasal senses. Their tongues flick continuously, bringing odor molecules into contact with the chemosensory (vomeronasal) organ in the top of their mouths (Jacobson's organ). Their forked tongue increases surface area, enabling more odor molecules to be sensed.</li> </ul>

Phylum  
ChordataClass  
ReptiliaOrder  
SquamataFamily  
BoidaeGenus  
Boaspecies  
*B. constrictor imperator*