

# Corn snake

*Pantherophis guttatus*

🇫🇷 Serpent des blés · 🇩🇪 Kornnatter



## REGULATIONS

**Not CITES; non-domestic reptile**

OPAn: reptile minimum standards (size, hides, escape-proof). Cantonal/municipal permits may apply. Release prohibited; keep proof of origin.



## LIFESPAN

12–20 years



## ADULT WEIGHT

300–900 g



## ADULT SIZE

80–150 cm



## LIFESTYLE

Crepuscular, nocturnal



## SEXUAL MATURITY

18–36 months



## INCUBATION

55–70 days



## LITTER / CLUTCH SIZE

8–20 eggs



## Habitat & environment



**Type** — Ventilated terrestrial terrarium with thermal gradient and multiple hideouts



**Substrate** — Aspen shavings, sterile soil/sand, absorbent paper; avoid dusty or aromatic substrates.



**Exercise** — Enriched setup encouraging exploration; occasional secure handling sessions.



## Equipment

- Hideouts at the warm and cool spots
- Wide water bowl (allows soaking)
- Branches/low basking shelf
- Heat mat/heating controlled by thermostat
- Thermometers and hygrometer
- Adequate ventilation



## Technical parameters



### Hot spot

**30–32 °C**

Ground-level basking spot (surface), thermostat mandatory



### Cool spot

**22–25 °C**

Stable cool zone



### Ambient

**24–28 °C**

Ideal horizontal gradient



### Humidity

**40–60 %**

Humid hide at 70–80% during shedding



## Lighting



**Photoperiod** — 10–12 h/day



**UVB need** — Not essential but beneficial



**Lamp type** — Low-intensity UVB fluorescent tube (UVI 0.5–1)



**Recommended brands** — X-Reptile · Reptile Expert · Solar Raptor · Arcadia



**Replacement** — Every 6 months (UVB depletes before visible light)



UVB does not pass through glass or plexiglass. Place the lamp inside the terrarium, under a protective grille.

Indirect daylight.

## Behaviour

Discreet, docile snake; tolerates brief handling; enjoys hiding and light burrowing.

 **Social life** — Solitary species; avoid cohabitation outside of breeding.

 **Activity cycle** — Crepuscular/nocturnal; daytime activity varies with the environment.

## Enrichment

- Multiple hideouts of varied texture/size
- Low branches and climbing areas
- Burrowable substrate
- Varied terrain and scents

## Nutrition

Strict carnivore: thawed captive-bred rodents sized to the snake's widest girth.

### Daily base

#### Adult Mouse

Mice thawed through and warmed; strict hygiene

#### Rat Pup

Fuzzy rats sized to the adult; transition gradually

### ★ **Treats (occasional)**

Occasional and non-essential: day-old captive-bred chicks.

#### Chick

Day-old chicks; vary occasionally; supplement Ca if used frequently

### FREQUENCY

- Juveniles: 1 prey item every 5-7 days
- Subadults: every 7-10 days
- Adults: every 10-14 days; adjust based on BCS/season

### TO AVOID

#### Live prey

No live prey without supervision (bite risk)

#### Wild-caught rodents

Parasite/pathogen risk

#### Processed food

Processed human foods (deli meats, etc.) prohibited

## Health & prevention

### Preventive medicine

Quarantine new arrivals (≥ 60 days), parasite screening (faecal, smear), terrarium hygiene, strict control of thermal gradients and humidity, weight management.

### Vaccination

No routine vaccinations

### Surgery & neutering

Ovariosalpingectomy for dystocia/follicular stasis, foreign-body removal, abscess debridement, stomatotomy for severe stomatitis.

### Common conditions

### WARNING SIGNS

- Prolonged anorexia (>3-4 weeks outside brumation)
- Open-mouth breathing, wheezing, nasal bubbles
- Dysecdysis (patchy shed), retained spectacles
- Stomatitis: drooling, refusal to feed, oral discoloration
- Chronic diarrhoea or regurgitation
- Lethargy, weight loss

**If any of these symptoms appear, prompt veterinary care is essential.**  
Contact an exotic-pet vet as soon as possible.

### Bacterial respiratory infections

**SYMPTOMS** Nasal discharge, wheezing, open-mouth breathing, lethargy

**CAUSE** Chronic hypothermia, inadequate humidity, opportunistic pathogens (*Pseudomonas*, *Aeromonas*, etc.)

**PREVENTION** Correct thermal gradient, hygiene, quarantine and screening of new arrivals

### Stomatitis (mouth rot)

**SYMPTOMS** Gingival erythema, caseous exudate, oral pain, anorexia

**CAUSE** Oral trauma, poor hygiene, immunosuppression, opportunistic bacteria

**PREVENTION** Hygiene, husbandry monitoring, prompt treatment of injuries

### Dysecdysis and retained spectacles

**SYMPTOMS** Incomplete shed, retained rings, persistent eye opacity

**CAUSE** Inadequate humidity, dehydration, ectoparasites, husbandry deficiencies

**PREVENTION** Adequate humidity, humid hide during shedding, occasional soaking

### Internal parasites (nematodes, coccidia, *Cryptosporidium* spp.)

**SYMPTOMS** Weight loss, diarrhoea, regurgitation, reduced appetite

**CAUSE** Contaminated prey/animals, lack of quarantine

**PREVENTION** Strict quarantine, regular faecal screens, hygiene of feeding equipment

### Reptile mites (*Ophionyssus natricis*)

**SYMPTOMS** Pruritus, restlessness, skin lesions, anaemia, dysecdysis

**CAUSE** Introduction of infested animals/equipment

**PREVENTION** Quarantine, systematic inspection, environmental treatment

### Constipation/obstipation and regurgitation

**SYMPTOMS** Prolonged absence of faeces, distension, post-prandial vomiting/regurgitation

**CAUSE** Temperatures too low, prey too large, handling after feeding, dehydration

**PREVENTION** Appropriately sized prey, rest after feeding, optimal temperature, hydration

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