

Yellow Anaconda (AKA Water Boa, Paraguay Anaconda, Sucuri Amorela, Curiyu)

Basic Information and Care Requirements

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Introduction:

The Yellow Anaconda is not a snake for beginners. They require a humid environment with access to a large water source. In the wild they are highly aquatic. They can live up to 30 years or more. As a general rule, the larger captive bred specimens tend not to be aggressive, but that does not mean they are not all capable of biting and severely injuring you. Yellow Anacondas are solitary and nocturnal. Their eyes are high on their head allowing them to see out of the water while staying mostly submerged. They can stay underwater for about 10 minutes at a time.



Basic Information:

Scientific Name – *Eunectes notaeus*

Natural Habitat – Ranging through a wide variety of terrains including forests and savannahs, but primarily swamps and forests in the Amazon basin of South America (in Yellow)

Size – Males average growth is up to 8 feet, females average up to 12 feet. Their weight is heavy compared to boas, up to 40 lbs.

Lifespan – expect 10 - 30 years for a healthy snake in captivity

Diet – carnivorous, feed weekly, appropriately sized mice, rats, or rabbits and provide constant access to fresh, clean water.

Housing – While young anacondas can be housed in small enclosures (this actually seems to make the smaller snakes feel more secure), you must be prepared to provide a much larger enclosure for an adult. The rule here is “the bigger, the better.” Ideally, you should provide an enclosure at least 6’L X 2’W X 2’H. The idea is to provide your animal with enough room to stretch out, and for a temperature range within its environment. You will need to provide a large water source, at least 6 inches deep or more. Remember that anacondas are highly aquatic. NOTE: The water source should be close enough to the basking spot to stay warm (think tropical). Your anaconda may avoid cold water altogether, causing problems. You will need to provide some form of hiding space such as cork bark or a hide box, and some climbing branches will be readily utilized by these snakes. The yellow anacondas will climb if presented a structure on which to do so. You can use paper, outdoor carpeting, cypress or aspen mulch, even potting soil that does not contain perlite as a substrate. Irregardless of what substrate you use, it is vital that you keep it clean.

Lighting and Heating:

Your Yellow Anaconda will need a source of diffuse daytime lighting which can be provided by using a reptile daytime spot light. This will also provide a source of heat and a basking spot. You

may also wish to provide a nighttime bulb or ceramic heater to maintain the temperature at night without the bright light which would disturb the snake at night. **Do not use a white light at night!** You should provide an overall enclosure temperature of 75-85°F with a basking spot around 95°F. Night time temperatures can drop to ~75-80°F. Snakes do not require UV lighting like most other reptiles. If using light bulbs for heat, be sure that they are placed in such a way that the snake cannot contact any hot surfaces. You can also provide heat through under tank heaters and specialty reptile heating platforms. Be sure to use a thermoregulator to allow for better control over the temperature. The heated area does need to be large enough for the entire snake to bask. A small spot of heat will not be enough for a large snake.

Humidity: Anacondas require a high relative humidity around 50-60%. Maintaining this level of humidity will help to avoid illnesses and also aid the snake in shedding properly. If you use a spot light heat source and have a screen top, you will need to keep a close eye on the humidity as the enclosure will dry out rapidly.

Choosing a snake and acclimatizing it to your home:

When choosing a pet, look for an individual that is active and responsive to handling, and which feels strong and muscular. Animals which show loose folds of skin along the body (dehydration); lumps along the body; signs of external parasites such as ticks or mites (look closely around the mouth, eyes, and cloaca); signs of runny or bloody feces in the tank (internal parasites), any discharge of mucus from the mouth, nose, or eyes may be unhealthy. If possible, find out if the animal is eating well, and what it has been fed. Yellow Anacondas can be difficult to start feeding.

It is not unusual for a snake to refuse to feed immediately when you change its environment. Provide a good set up, and give it some time to adjust to its new home. Try not to handle it or overly disturb it for about two weeks, then how it responds to contact and an offering of food. A visit to a veterinarian is recommended for a fecal exam to detect internal parasites.

Sources:

de Vosjoli, Phillippe et al., The Boa Constrictor Manual. Mission Viejo, CA: Advanced Vivarium Systems, 1998. www.avbooks.com

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For a more detailed information, please read our advanced care sheets at www.grare.org/library/care.html