

Biofacts: Kenyan Sand

Boa

Scientific Name:

Eryx colubrinus loveridgei



Habitat:

The Kenyan Sand Boa is found in semi-arid desert regions or rock outcroppings of Northeastern Africa: From Egypt, to Tanzania, and west Somalia to Kenya.

Lifespan:

Sand boas typically live into their mid-teens. Some in captivity have lived up to 20 years.

Behavior:

Snakes are carnivores. These boas feed mostly on small rodents (naked mole rats), small lizards, or large insects. If food is scarce, these snakes can go up to a year without eating.

Kenyan Sand Boas are crepuscular, feeding mostly in the early morning, or late evening to avoid the heat. When prey comes within striking range, the boas will grab, and then constrict their prey, sometimes dragging it under the sand to kill it.

Kenyan Sand Boas have their nostrils and eyes located on the top of their head in order to keep them sand-free, while the rest of their body is buried. This provides excellent camouflage, and helps them avoid the desert heat during the day.

Fun Facts!

- Kenyan Sand Boas are ovoviviparous, meaning they bear live young. The young snakes stay in egg sacs, and then hatch live after about four months. This is common within the boa family.
- While the sand boa is a boa constrictor, its short tail can't be coiled. The overall shape of the snake is predicted to help burrow its body underground quickly, rather than built just for constriction.
- Kenyan Sand Boas are the most popular sand boas as pets in the United States. Tanzania stopped the collection of wild sand boas in 1995, so many of the ones found in captivity are captive bred.

Want to learn more? Visit these websites to learn more about Kenyan Sand Boas!

Utah's Hogle Zoo: https://www.hoglezoo.org/meet_our_animals/animal_finder/kenyan_sand_boa/

National Geographic: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/reptiles/group/snakes/>

Rosamond Gifford Zoo:

<http://www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org/assets/uploads/animals/pdf/KenyanSandBoa.pdf>