



California Kingsnake

lampropeltis getulus californiae (loosely translate to "shiny scales")

Adult Size	They reach adult size between 3-4 years. Sizes can range from 4-5 feet. 6 feet in some cases is not uncommon.	Life Span:	10-15 is the Average life span, however in captivity they can live well over 20+ years.
Male/Female Differences	Adult females tend to be larger in girth and size for breeding purposes.		
Compatibility	Do not house these snakes together. They are territorial and are nick named "Snake eaters" because of their consistency to eat any cage mate they come across.		
Origin	Primarily from California, can also be found in southwest parts of Oregon, Nevada and some parts of Arizona.		
Climate	Warm dry climates, deserts or forests.		
Day Cycle	Diurnal		
Temperature	Ambient temperature of 80-84F. Basking 85-90F never exceed 90F. A nighttime temperature of 70-75F. Do not let it drop below 70F at night. These temperatures are extremely important to promote healthy thermoregulation. Since the snake is cold blooded it uses its surrounding temperatures to regulate its internal temperature.		
Lighting	Kingsnakes need a total of 3 different lighting systems. The first is going to be a cool burning full-spectrum UVA UVB light bulb, this should be on for 9-12 hours a day. This is going to act as the sun for the Kingsnake, this aids in physical and mental health, as well as allow the snake to recognize its food. It also shows off the beautiful color and shine of the snake. Two extra heat lamps are required for thermal regulation as well. A white daytime heat bulb should be on for 12 hours to maintain a hotter basking temperature. A nighttime Infra-red Heat lamp should be used as well.		

	<p>This is going to remain on all the time, insuring your tanks overall temperature never falls below 70F. The Infra-red is nice because it doesn't give off any ambient lighting and is perfect if the snake is being kept in a child's room. A heating pad can also be used as another type of heat. Make sure to not allow the snake to come in direct contact with the heating pad, this can cause burns on the scales. Use substrate or a cage carpet mat as a buffer.</p>
Humidity	<p>Very low humidity, lightly mist them during the daylight hours, or use a humidity box, which is closed box with substrate that can retain humidity. (moss or coconut husk) A water dish deep enough to submerge themselves. High percentages of humidity can lead to respiratory problems.</p>
Habitat/Territory	<p>Across their various ranges, Kingsnakes find similar habitats to live in. They live in forests, grasslands, suburbia, and rocky areas in fields and deserts.</p>
Substrate/Bedding	<p>Use a substrate that can allow your snake to burrow underneath. Burrowing is a common behavior for these animals, they use it to humidify themselves underground as well as seeking seclusion during shedding or to digest. These include but are not limited to: Newspaper aspen shavings or a paper-based bedding known as CareFresh. Tree bark and coconut husk may be used as well. Avoid cedar/pine shavings or rock based substrate. The oils in cedar and pine have a harmful affect to snakes over-time.</p>
Hiding Place/Den	<p>Hides can be as simple or as elaborate as you want, just so long as they fulfill one basic purpose. They must give your California Kingsnake a dark and secure place to go in order to feel safe, where even you cannot see them. A snake hide made of plastic, ceramic or stone can be washed as needed and will also last a long time. Preferred hiding huts or dens are: snake caves, snake huts and snake boxes. Tupperware containers can be used as-well or even a shoe box, but make sure you change or clean it when it becomes dirty. These should only be used if the appropriate hiding dens are not available.</p>
Cage Type	<p>Glass terrariums are the preferred method for housing these guys. It's also recommended that you find a cage with some sort of locking mechanism on the top, or purchase cages clips to make the cage escape proof. These snakes can find the smallest opening and work their way through and out into the open world. Adult sizes snakes need a minimum of 30 Gallon cage, to be happy and promote healthy growth. Hatchlings can be kept in a smaller 20 Gallon terrarium until they reach maturity.</p>
Diet	<p>In the wild, California kingsnakes will eat rodents, birds, lizards, and even other snakes. In captivity, these snakes will do extremely well on a diet of frozen rodents, captive-bred mice and rats. Feeding defrosted frozen</p>

	<p>mice is the preferred method. This reduces aggression during feeding time between you and your snake. It also hinders the natural predatory instinct to hunt, which leads to a nicer, less aggressive, snake.</p>
Supplements	<p>None required, they get everything they need from their food.</p>
Diet Precautions	<p>Do not feed your snake rodents from outside; they can have parasites that can be transferred to your snake when it finishes digesting. Always purchase rodents from a reputable pet store or mouse/rat breeder to ensure the health of your snake. Never attempt to feed a mouse that is too big for your snake. This can cause choking and potentially death. Kingsnakes can unhinge their jaw and open their mouths 3x the width of their original mouth size. Use caution when feeding live mice, if left alone the mouse can potentially bite through the snake's scales, leaving them susceptible to infections.</p>
Feeding	<p>Snakes benefit from having a routine, so try to feed Kingsnakes once a week, on the same day. Average feeding about is 1-2 mice a week using tongs to avoid being accidentally struck at. If you want to put weight on to your snake there's a feeding process called "fast feeding" where you feed 3 mice/rodents once a week. Snakes do the majority of their growing in the first 5 years of their lives. Another good thing to look out for is when your snake defecates, this means the previous meal has been fully digested from the week before, and the snake is ready for the next feeding. A hungry snake will be overly active and roaming around their enclosure, opposed to hiding in their den. It's important to not handle your snake for 24 hours after feeding, if they feel threatened after consuming their prey, their natural reaction is to regurgitate the feeding. Leaving you back where you started. It's also important to feed your snake in a separate container besides its cage. This will promote healthy feeding habits, as well as allowing your snake to determine if it's play time or feeding time. Feeding live rodents should be avoided, as this can cause over aggression of your snake during and after feeding time. Avoid feeding a kingsnake during its shedding process, primarily because the snake will not have an appetite. It can also lead to accident bites, the snake is extremely vulnerable and their eye sight is hindered during this time.</p>
Water Source	<p>A Decent size water dish or bowl should be housed in the cage. This will help aid in the shedding process, as well as if your snake ever gets thirsty. The preferred method is a larger Snake soaking dish sold at pet stores. A large Tupperware container or litter-pan can suffice until the proper dish is purchased.</p>
Grooming	<p>Soaking your kingsnake when it's about to shed will also help the overall process. Snakes absorb the majority of their water through a small pore by their tail called a cloaca. This helps them stay hydrated as well</p>

Shedding	Kingsnakes are constantly growing for their entire lives, like most snakes. If you keep feeding them on a regular basis they will normally shed about 1-2 times a month. This normally happens a few days after feeding. You'll be able to tell by the opaque dull color of your snakes scales, as well as cloudy/blue eyes. During this time you can assist your snake in shedding by laying a damp towel in the snakes' cage and allow him to slither through it. This will lubricate the skin making it easy to come off in a full piece. Avoid feeding and handling during sheds, as it can cause them stress and make even friendly snakes aggressive.
Proper Handling	Kingsnakes are very social reptiles and love to be held sat quietly with. Always be sure to support the snake when handling (this is know as walking the snake) Putting one hand in front of the other allowing the snake to move freely. Use caution when the snake is around or near your face. Always wash your hands after handling a kingsnake as well as before in case you have rodent smells on your hands, They have been known to strike by mistake because of the misleading aroma of mice.
Habitat Maintenance	Substrate should be changed every 1-2 weeks. A full cage cleaning and overhaul should be done monthly to ensure a clean environment for you and your snake. As well as cleaning off all decorations or enclosures with a light vinegar solution. Bleach and chemicals are very harmful to snakes.
Health Concerns	<p>Anorexia (Lack of Appetite)-This is perhaps one of the most common conditions seen in captive snakes. Anorexia is not a disease, it is a symptom—a consequence of something else that is wrong with the snake. The reason is normally improper husbandry</p> <p>Pneumonia Respiratory: Over humidifying can lead to these illnesses. Bacterial, viral or fungal lung infections, for example, can cause respiratory signs. So can lung mites, lung worms, lung abscesses, lung cancer and heart failure.</p> <p>Vomiting/Regurgitation: Improper handling of the snake after feeding, or if the snake feels threatened. This can also happen because of poor husbandry.</p> <p>Infectious Stomatitis (Mouth Rot): This generally refers to any disease condition that affects the teeth and gums. Just as with anorexia, infectious stomatitis is a symptom of some other underlying condition. The infection in the mouth occurs when snakes immune system is stressed.</p> <p>Dysecdysis-Improper shedding and retained eye caps,as a result of poor husbandry and lack of humidity</p>