

# Honduran Milk Snake

*(Lampropeltis Triangulum Hondurensis)*



Many color morphs exist, this is the standard pattern.

<b>Adult Size</b>	2 ft. to 6 ft. depending on species
<b>Life Span</b>	10-15 years
<b>Male/Female Differences</b>	The female has a much shorter and stubbier tale, while the male's tail is elongated.
<b>Compatibility</b>	Milk Snakes are best kept singly. Many Milk Snake species favor other snakes as food and are notorious cannibals.
<b>Origin</b>	Subtropical lowland areas of Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.
<b>Climate</b>	Tropical.
<b>Day Cycle</b>	Primarily nocturnal.
<b>Temperature</b>	The hot end of the enclosure should be 86-90°F while the cool end should be approximately 76-80°F. During the night, the temperature should drop to a more constant overall temperature of 74-78°F.
<b>Lighting</b>	Supplemental lighting is not necessary for Milk Snakes. Full spectrum lighting however increases appetite and emotional health if used on a 12/12 cycle, meaning 12 hours on and 12 hours off. Continuous bright, overhead lighting is stressful to snakes. Make sure to provide a basking spot if one plans on using UVB lighting.
<b>Humidity</b>	50-70% humidity.
<b>Habitat/Territory</b>	Tropical lowlands. Extremely partial to shady areas and caves.
<b>Substrate/Bedding</b>	Some viable options for substrate include; sterilized bark, cage carpet, cypress mulch, or coconut husk. Keep damp moss in about 30% of your cage located on or near your snakes hiding spot. Cage should be sprayed down once or twice day to maintain proper humidity levels. Less porous substrate is least likely to develop mite infestations and will increase ease of cleaning.

<b>Hiding Place/Den</b>	Provide abundant plants - either artificial or real - as well as caves or hides on both ends of the tank. Milk Snakes spend a lot of their time burrowed and without easy access to hiding spots can become stressed.
<b>Cage Type</b>	Snakes are excellent escape artist and need a secure, ventilated lid. Cage clips on both ends of the cage should keep your snake safe and secure. Many snakes can be housed in smaller sized tanks, however Milk Snakes seem to do well in <i>larger</i> enclosures. Minimally a 20 gallon cage should be provided, however this specific species of snake will appreciate any tank larger than that.
<b>Diet</b>	Feed your milk snake an appropriately sized rodent weekly. "Appropriately sized" means prey items that are no bigger in circumference than the snake at its largest circumference. How often to feed really depends on what size prey is being offered. If one chooses to offer the smaller size, a feeding schedule of every seven days works well. Slightly larger prey items can be fed every ten days. Excessively large prey items will cause the snake to refuse food on its own for an extended and unpredictable length of time.
<b>Supplements</b>	If feeding healthy prey foods frequently enough, no supplements are necessary. At times a veterinarian could recommend supplements to offset health issues.
<b>Diet Precautions</b>	Do not handle your snake for at least a day after feeding, as this can lead to regurgitation. Snakes can be fed frozen and defrosted rodents. Never leave a live rodent unattended with any snake, as they can injure the snake. If feeding live rodents, it is advised to pre-kill the prey first. Avoid feeding any snake during a shed. Snake's senses are clouded during a shed and eating prey will make the snake's skin stretch causing improper shedding.
<b>Feeding</b>	It is highly recommended to feed your pet in a dedicated feeding cage. In an escape proof enclose, place feeder prey in first then place the snake in the feeding container. Overtime the snake will associate the feeding container as time to have its meal. This method will prevent your snake from associating your hand as food which could lead to the snake striking your hand as you reach into the cage. Milk snakes can feed on mice their entire lives. Most snakes are ready to feed after a fecal. Usually sedentary if content, seeing a milk snake moving around a cage usually indicates the snake is hungry and looking for food.
<b>Water Source</b>	Always have fresh, clean water available for your pet companion. Check the water daily. Provide a container large enough for the critter to crawl into and soak. Milk snakes enjoy a nice soak from time to time. Ensure that the water bowl is not too deep for juvenile animals – 1 inch or so will suffice. Snakes of many species will defecate in their water bowls from time to time, so be prepared to clean and disinfect the water bowl. The water bowl should be cleaned and disinfected on a weekly basis. Having a

spare water bowl for such occasions can be handy, so that one may be used while the other is being cleaned.

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**Grooming**

Once the eyes turn cloudy your snake is about to shed. Avoid handling any snake during a shedding cycle since this can cause stress to the snake and also cause improper sheds. During shedding periods a good method is to place damp terry cloth towel loosely covering the bottom of the cage. The python will crawl throughout the folds of the towel and will absorb the moisture while aiding in exfoliation. Depending on the age and health of your snake, it will shed its skin every 4 - 8 weeks. During this time it is a good idea to pay special attention to your humidity levels – bumping them to 60%-70% to ensure there is enough moisture present to assist in the process. Given good husbandry practices and properly maintained humidity; your snake should have no problems shedding successfully. Many folks believe “one-piece-sheds” to be a hallmark of good husbandry, this is sometimes heavily dependent on how the snake sheds and what items within the enclosure can be used to rub against. The sheds should be complete and without retained patches and or eye-caps still covering the eyes. Partial/incomplete sheds are an indication of poor animal husbandry.

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**Proper Handling**

Milk snakes are known to be very docile animals and are very comfortable with being handled. Rarely shy at first, the goal is to establish trust between you and your snake. If you are keeping a snake as a pet, regular handling (once or twice a week) is essential. Also remember that the less often you handle your snake, the less it will be used to being handled. Snakes can become defensive if handler won't sit still, is loud and or has strong odors/perfumes. While handling snakes do so in a quiet setting.

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**Habitat Maintenance**

Make sure you spot clean the cage at least once a week. Do a thorough cleaning once a month. This means removing all of the contents of the cage and disinfecting them with an appropriate cleansing solution. The substrate should also be completely changed once a month. Change immediately if the environment is too saturated with water.

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**Health Concerns**

Infectious diseases and parasites can look like white, red, or black dots. If mites are spotted used a miticide to clean your snake and the cage. Mouth rot can occur if food or debris gets lodged inside mouth without being removed, pay close attention. The last two primary health concerns deal with humidity and temperature. Too dry, and your snake can suffer from patchy sheds or eye caps not coming off along with the shed. Too damp a substrate or improper and fluctuating temperature can lead to chronic colds or respiratory infections.