



Western New York Herpetological Society

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Common Name: Kenyan Sand Boa, Egyptian Sand Boa **Latin name:** *Eryx colubrinus*
East African Sand Boa

Native to: East Africa; Egypt south to Tanzania; southwest Somalia west to Kenya

Size: Females are generally larger than males reaching lengths of 26 to 32 inches and weighing up to two pounds. Some females have reached up to 40 inches in length. Males generally only reach 15 inches in length.

Life span: These sand boas can quite easily live for more than 15 years.

General Appearance: Both the Egyptian sand boa (*E. c. colubrinus*) and the Kenyan sand boa (*E. c. loveridgei*) are heavy body snakes with small heads, small eyes, and short tails. The belly and is white or cream colored in both subspecies. The Egyptian sand boa (*E. c. colubrinus*) has a yellow coloration with dark brown splotches. The Kenyan sand boa (*E. c. loveridgei*) has an orange coloration with dark brown splotches. Various color morphs are also now available including albino and axanthic.

Housing requirements:

Enclosure: Adult female sand boas can be adequately kept in 20-gallon aquariums while males can be kept in 10-gallon aquariums. Plastic sweater boxes can also be used as well for these species if they are modified to provide adequate ventilation for the boa. Generally females do well with 1½ to 2½ square feet of floor space while males can be kept with only one square foot of floor space.

Temperature: Sand boas are extremely tolerant of large temperature extremes of 60° to 100° F. They are best kept however at temperatures of 80° to 85° F with a basking temperature of 90° to 95° F. Night temperatures can drop to as low as 75° to 77° F.

Heat/Light: There has been no evidence to suggest that photoperiods affect the keeping of this species. If a regular photoperiod is provided it is recommended to use fluorescent bulbs in order to minimize the extra heat generated by incandescent bulbs.

When providing heat, do NOT use hot rocks. Hot rocks are notoriously unpredictable and can cause serious burn injuries to your animal. Red basking bulbs or ceramic emitters can be used to generate basking spots. Under the tank heating pads can also be used to help raise the ambient temperature of the enclosure. It is recommended to routinely check the temperatures of the enclosure with thermometers.

Substrate: Sand boas require three to five inches of substrate that allows them to burrow. Aspen or a sand/soil mix often works best to provide a suitable substrate for the boas to create their own burrows. If using a sand/soil mix a small amount of water added to the mix will help the formation of stable burrows.

Environment: This is a burrowing species and does not require any cage furniture to climb or hide boxes. A small humidity chamber can be provided to assist in shedding if needed.

Diet: Sand boas do well on a diet of rodents. Hatchlings can feed on pinky mice. Large adult females can feed on prey as large as small adult rats. Usually one appropriate sized prey item per week can be fed. During the winter months these sand boas will often stop feeding with no ill effects.



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Maintenance: Fresh water should be offered daily. The enclosure should be spot cleaned as needed. Periodically, the enclosure should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. A 5% bleach solution makes an excellent disinfectant. Be sure to rinse the enclosure thoroughly after disinfecting. As always, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after handling your sand boa or any cage accessories

Other references or recommended reading:

- "East African Sand Boa." 1999 VIDA Preciosa Publishing LLC. Retrieved 24 February 2002
<<http://www.vpi.com/8VPICareSheets/Sandboas/EastAfricanSandboa/EastAfricanSandboaDesc.htm>>
- Harrison, Chris. "The East African Sand Boa." Retrieved 24 February 2002
<<http://www.kingsnake.com/sandboa/colubrin.html>>
- Loving, Denise. "Kenyan (EastAfrican) Sand Boa Care Sheet." 1997 Retrieved 24 February 2002
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