Red-tailed Boa
Boa constrictor constrictor

Scientific Name
Boa constrictor constrictor

Other Names
Colombian Red-tailed Boa

Range
Central and South America

Habitat
Woodlands, semi-arid forests and rainforests

Average Size
Length: 10 ft
Weight: 50 lbs.

Description
Large constrictor with irregular brownish-black oval patches on top and sides of body, and light colored scales underneath. A large, black stripe runs the length of each side of the head, passing through the eyes.

Diet
In the wild: Small rodents, lizards, birds and eggs
In captivity: Two large rats once a month

Lifespan
In the wild: Estimated at 15 years
In captivity: Up to 25 years

Incubation
Viviparous

Sexual Maturity
In the wild: Estimated at 3 years
In captivity: 3 years

Clutch Size
15 – 40 offspring

Predators
Large cats, crocodilians and humans

Population Status
Endangered

Behavior
These large snakes are crepuscular or nocturnal, spending the daylight hours hiding in rocky crevices or among tree roots. They are moderate climbers, but due to their size are unable to move in the thin branches near the tops of the trees. Red-tailed Boas are also adept swimmers and can be found underwater in the heat of the day. Rather than always actively hunting for their food, these boas often camouflage at the edge of a game trail and wait for animals to happen by. They have heat sensing nerves on their lips to help them locate prey. Red-tailed Boas have also been seen crawling into a mammal burrow and waiting by the entrance for three to four days for prey to come in. They strike their prey then encircle it with two to three body coils until it suffocates. Like all snakes, they swallow their meal whole and depending upon the size of the meal, may eat as infrequently as once a month.

Reproduction and Breeding
Red-tailed Boas are solitary unless they are mating, which can take place at any time throughout the year. They are live bearers with the adults offering no protection to the offspring after they are born. The foot-long youngsters must use instinct to protect themselves from predators.

Conservation
This species is listed as endangered and is illegal in the pet and animal products trade. Many are illegally hunted for food and skins each year, with many more being captured for use in the pet trade in the United States despite their ability to breed readily in captivity. Although they are adaptable to a range of habitats, the loss of rainforest and pristine temperate forests in South and Central America continues to put pressure on their survival in the wild.
Amazing Facts

Snakes do not have eyelids, so they can never blink. They have a scale that covers their eyes for protection!

All boas of the world give live birth!

Contrary to popular belief, snakes do not unhinge their jaws to eat. Their jaws have special hinges on the side and a stretchy ligament in the front of the lower jaw so large prey can be swallowed whole!

Red-tailed Boa

The Sacramento Zoological Society
3930 West Land Park Dr., Sacramento, CA 95822
T: 916-808-5888 F: 916-264-7385 E: info@saczoo.org
saczoo.org