

Reticulated Python

Scientific Name: *Python reticulatus*

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Boidae



This is the world's longest snake, but not the heaviest. The Reticulated Python ranges in length from 4.9 to 21.3 ft and in a weight from 2.2 to 165.3 lbs. The beautiful markings on the skin of this snake make it almost impossible to pick it out in the leaf litter of the forest floor. The back of the python has a series of irregular diamond shapes flanked by smaller markings with light centers. A large variation of size, colour, and markings commonly occurs as a result of geographic location. It is hunted for its skin, medicines, and the pet trade.

Range

India, Indochina

Habitat

Rainforest

Gestation

Incubation: 60 to 80 days

Litter

up to 100 eggs in clutch

Behavior

Its favorite hunting technique is to just lie in wait for some animal to pass by. When its prey comes within reach it seizes it with a lightning strike and holds on with a vice-like grip. It then coils its body around the animal and squeezes so that the animal can no longer breathe, and as a result dies. The prey is then eaten. While stories about this python eating large prey such as wild boar, adult deer and full-grown leopards are true, its more usual prey are much smaller: rats, rabbits, squirrels, birds, monkeys, etc. These are much easier to overpower, and their consumption does not inhibit the snake from ordinary movements. When very large prey is consumed the python may be almost immobile for several days, and cannot defend itself from its enemies, such as tigers, bears or leopards.

Reproduction

The eggs are large, oval and soft-shelled. After laying her eggs in a hole or cave the female abandons them to hatch by themselves. Hatchlings may measure from 22 to 30 inches. Growth is rapid during the first few years, then slows with advancing years.

Wild Diet

Primarily warm-blooded vertebrate