



WESTERN HOGNOSE

Care Guide

Western hognose snakes are small colubrid who have amazing defensive tactics and are one of the only species in the world to 'play dead' to prevent being eaten by predators.

Genus, Species	Heterodon nasicus
Adult Size	2-3 feet
Habitat	Scrublands
Lifespan	15-20 Years
Diet	Mice once a week
Ambient Temp (f)	85-88
Basking Temp (f)	90-93
Night time Temp (f)	70-80
UVB Zone	1 (UVI 0.1-1.0)
Humidity (%)	50-60
Locality	North America
Difficulty	2/5

Health Check (Common issues)

Eyes– check the eyes are clear of infection, discharge or stuck eye caps (these can occur from a dry shed, increase the humidity or place snake on soak periodically until eye caps come off).

Skin– check the skin for black spots or raised scales which can be a sign of mites. Mites can usually be seen around the eye socket and under the chin. Mites can be treated using a number of chemical products or for a natural cure, Tauruss predatory mites can be used regularly for prevention and treatment.

Respiratory Infections– RI is a term for a broad spectrum of infections in the lungs and respiratory system. It is generally caused by ill health along with damp or cold conditions and can be treated with a nebuliser. We always recommend seeing the vet if you suspect RI, however it is extremely rare and is not usually the actual cause of the symptoms that are seen.

Housing your snake:

There are a number of wooden, plastic and glass enclosure available for hognose snakes. Always purchase an enclosure which is a suitable size for your animal. Plastic or wooden and part glass enclosures are the best as glass alone can make it hard to control temperature. Always try to use a thermostat with your enclosure to enable the snake to gain suitable hot and cold temperatures.

There are many substrates available including aspen, lignocel or numerous natural and forest like substrates. Provide a large water bowl big enough for your snake to bathe in if it chooses to soak. Depending on the enclosure, you will need a heat mat or bulb/ceramic lamp for your snake in order to provide the required hot spot. UVB should be provided at low level where possible as this improves health. The enclosure should have adequate ventilation so that the tank doesn't become humid and mouldy. The substrate can be spot cleaned daily and the enclosure should be fully cleaned and substrate replaced every 4 weeks or sooner if required. Westerns hognoses are rear-fanged venomous snakes but their venom is so mild that it rarely effects humans. Occasionally those with allergies or low immune systems can have a reaction to western hognose venom but the effects are generally mild. Western hognoses have distinctive characteristics and have a beak like face. The hard scale on the top of the nose helps them to bury down in the ground and move around in their environment. Western hognoses dont strike for food like other snakes. They grab their food sideways and munch their food whilst turning it around to enable them to eat the prey item

Handling your snake:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling your snake
- Use a hook to gently stroke the top of your snakes nose to distinguish between handling and feeding times (tap training)
- Pick your snake up from the bottom by scooping it and do not handle the first 3rd of the snakes body where the vital organs are
- Do not handle your snake after eating, always wait at least 48 hours to prevent stress

Sexing your snake:

Male and female snakes may differ between sizes and length of tail, but to get an accurate gender of your snake there are 2 methods available. 1 is to get a set of probes and probe your snake by sliding the probe under the vent towards the tail. If the probe only goes in a small amount then the snake is female, if the snake is male the probe will slide further, this is where the hemipenes are. The other is to 'pop' the snake which involves holding the snakes tail in one hand and gently bending whilst rolling towards the vent with the other hand, exposing the snakes genitals. **Always have your snake sexed by a professional to avoid harm.**

Shopping list:

- Substrate: Bark chips, lignocel, aspen, cypress mulch
- Heat bulb/ceramic/heat mat
- UVB light
- Thermometer, Hygrometer and Thermostat
- Feeding tongs
- A large water bowl that the snake can bathe in
- Hides
- Plants/Décor
- Pet care guide/sheet
- Reptile safe disinfectant

Feeding your snake:

Hognose snakes eat frogs, lizards and rodents in the wild but in captivity are on a regular diet of mice.

Hognose snakes will accept defrosted mice without the need for hot water, however some hognoses are encouraged by the heat and should be tried for problem feeders. Some hognose snakes drop feed which means the prey item should be left overnight for the snake to eat. Take care to remove food after this time. Some snakes do not feed when shedding so they may miss a feed. If this continues please contact us for feeding advice.