



Corn Snake Care Sheet

Background

- Pantherophis Guttatus
- Native to Southeastern United States
- When newly hatched, corn snakes can measure anywhere between 25-38 cm (10-15"), but they grow to be about 0.9-1.5 m (3-5') as adults.
- Life expectancy up to 15-25 years in captivity
- Crepuscular – most active at night
- Solitary animals except during mating

Housing

- Vivarium's are ideal to maintain temperature and humidity
- Minimum guidelines suggest the length and width of the vivarium should be equal to the length of the snake fully stretched out.
 - The larger the enclosure the better
 - The minimum vivarium size recommended by Apex vets is **at least 120 x 60 x 60cm (48"L x 24"W x 24"H)**
 - Corn snakes like to climb so provided good height and climbable furniture is recommended
- Substrates:
 - Bioactive enclosures
 - Cypress mulch/coco coir/top soil
 - Newspaper (as quarantine/hospital bedding)
- Spot clean enclosure regularly
- Replace substrate every few months
- Provide multiple hides
 - Hot and cold ends
 - Large enough for snake to curl up
 - Fake/real plants can be used to provide cover and reduce stress
- Provide lots of climbing areas as well
- Humidity in the enclosure should be around 65-75%, this is based on the average humidity in their natural habitat in America
- Offering a humid hide as well can help with shedding

Lighting and Heating

- Lighting
 - Although they are crepuscular it is still recommended to provide light within the enclosure to mimic a normal day/night cycle
 - Provide a light source to simulate daytime hours can help with the mental health of your snake
 - Standard times are usually 12 hours on and 12 hours off

- UV lighting
 - UVA is visible to reptiles
 - UVB is required for healthy metabolism and synthesis of vitamin D3
 - UVB is essential to keep a reptile healthy in captivity, UVA isn't medically necessary but can help with pets wellbeing
 - The length of time of which visible light is received in a day is referred to as "photoperiod" – incorrect photoperiods have been shown to cause reproductive disease, obesity and dietary problems
 - If a reptile is being supplemented with dietary calcium but no UVB light then it will be unable to absorb this calcium and cannot use it
- Deciding what light to get

Zone	Characteristics	UVI Zone range (all-day average)	Max UVI recorded (one-off maximum)	Species in original study	Species typical of Zone commonly held in captivity
1	Crepuscular or shade dweller	0 - 0.7	0.6 - 1.4	Cottonmouth water moccasin Texas rat snake Jamaican brown anole Broad-banded water snake	Leopard gecko Crested gecko Corn snake Burmese python
2	Partial sun or occasional basker	0.7 - 1.0	* 1.1 - 3.0	Western ribbon snake Green anole Jamaican blue-pants anole Yellow-bellied water snake	Redfooted tortoise Monkey-tailed skink Chinese water dragon Boa constrictor
3	Open or partial sun basker	1.0 - 2.6	2.9 - 7.4	Desert side-blotched lizard Eastern fence lizard Cuban brown anole Texas spiny lizard	Bearded dragon Spur-thighed tortoise Red-eared slider Day gecko
4	'Mid-day' open sun baskers	2.6 - 3.5	4.5 - 9.5	Lesser Earless Lizard Sagebrush Lizard Northern Prairie Lizard	Uromastyx Chuckwalla Rhinoceros iguana (NB: shade is vital even for these)

Shade Method
(Fluorescent UVB)
UV Index up to approx 1.0

Sunbeam Method
(Mercury vapour, metal halide, or T5-HO Fluorescent UVB)
UV Index up to approx. 7.0

UV-Tool 'Shade method'

UV-Tool 'Sunbeam method'

* Zone 2 reptiles in a larger enclosure would probably utilise gentle "sunbeam" UVB up to approx. UVI 3.0

- Corn snakes fit in to Ferguson Zone 1 and 2
- This means the ideal UVB lamps are 5-10% tubular bulbs used with a reflector.

- Ideal temperatures:
 - Basking 31°C (88°F)
 - Ambient day temperature 24-26°C (75-79°F)
 - Ambient night temperature 20°C (72°F)
- Heat can be provided by multiple methods and all should be used with a thermostat
 - Heat mats
 - Basking bulb
 - Ceramic heat emitter
- Heat mats can struggle to penetrate through the bedding
- Wattage of lamp is based on size of enclosure and the power needed to heat to the appropriate temperatures

Diet

- Usually fed on rodents
- Ideal size is the same width as 1.5x the size of the snakes head
- Hatchlings should be fed pinkies every 7 days
- Chicks and quail eggs can be used to add variety to diet but should not be relied on for 100% of the diet

- DO NOT FEED LIVE FOOD
- Avoid handling for 48 hours after feeding
- Watch for weight gain, obesity is a common problem in pet snakes
- Can also dust prey items with calcium or D3 powder to help fill in any gaps in the diet

General Care Tips

- Monitor snakes weight and when it sheds its skin
- Should shed their skin in one go
- Handle with care when snake is in blue (about to shed) they are more likely to bite during this time
- Increased humidity in the vivarium or a humid hide can help with shedding