

Carpet Python *Morelia spilota*



Care Guide

Last Updated 1/17/2025

Species Description & Overview

Adult Size

Adult Size can vary from 4'-12', depending on the subspecies

Subspecies, Colors, & Morphs

There are currently 6 known subspecies of Carpet Python, each with slightly different morphologies.

Coastal Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota mcdowelli*)



Coastal Carpet Pythons are one of the most popular Carpet Python subspecies kept as pets in the United States, with morphs consisting of Jaguar, Tiger, Tiger Jaguar, Axanathic, and Caramel. Growing to lengths of 8'-12' they are the largest subspecies of Carpet Python. Their coloration consists of browns, olives, grays, and yellows.

Jungle Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota cheynei*)



Ranging from 4'-7', this subspecies is known to be the most vibrant with bright tan, golden yellow, and black colors. Some of the Jungle Carpet Pythons found in the US are believed to actually be crosses with other Carpet Python subspecies.

Irian Jaya Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota harrisoni*)



Usually reaches lengths of 5'-6', with colors including light brown, beige, and reddish browns to make a detailed pattern. This species also consists of a granite morph, which is more gray in color.

Diamond Python (*Morelia spilota spilota*)



Diamond Pythons average out at 7' when full grown. This subspecies usually has a black body with either white or yellow markings. This specific subspecies is known for their calm demeanor.

Darwin Carpet Python (*Moriela spilota variegata*)



Darwin Carpet Pythons are known for their orange, yellow, and beige colors with either brown or black outlining. Full grown, they reach lengths of 5.9'. This is the first subspecies to see the albino morph present.

Inland Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota metcalfei*)



Adult Inland Carpet Pythons range in size from 8'-10', with 8' being more common. Depending on locality, they may have be found with silver, maroon, light brown, and/or black coloring in their patterns.

Life Expectancy

With proper care, Carpet Pythons can live 30+ years in captivity.

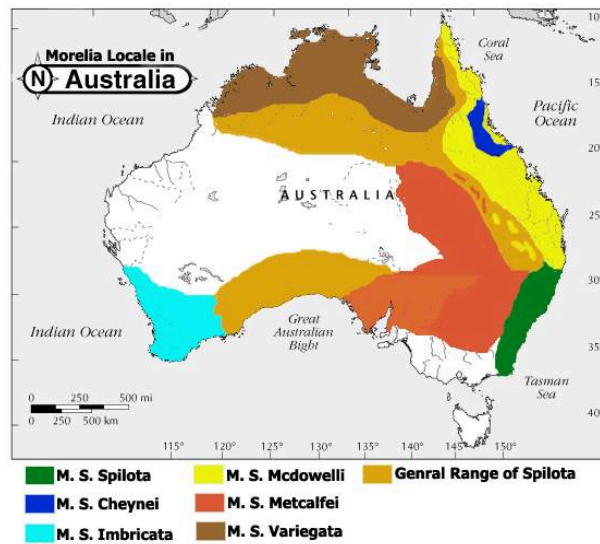


Carpet Python Hatching

Native Range & Habitat

With 6 different subspecies, native range varies, throughout Australia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. Despite this, they are not found in Western or Central Australia.

Carpet Pythons can be found in a variety of climates, making them highly adaptable. Habitats that they have been found in include woodlands, grasslands, farmland, tropical rainforests, and urban areas.



Coastal Carpet Pythons have a wide habitat range including eucalyptus forests, rainforests, and man-made areas.

Jungle Carpet Pythons are known for inhabiting rainforest regions including dunes and mangrove forests near rivers.

Irian Jaya Carpet Pythons is found in eucalyptus forests & the savannahs.

Diamond Pythons are found in dense and rocky or urban areas.

Darwin Carpet Pythons inhabit savannahs, gorges, mountainsides, and woodlands.

Inland Carpet Pythons can be found in mountain ranges.

Fun Facts

Carpet Pythons get their name because of the pattern on their backs, which scientists have described as resembling fancy oriental carpets.

Caring for Carpet Pythons

Enclosure Size

Enclosure size does depend on the size of the individual snake, with the formula **full length of snake x half length of snake** to determine the length and width of the enclosure system, and they should have at least 3' of height to allow for climbing opportunities. Based on this formula, most Carpet Pythons will need an enclosure that's at least 6.5'L x 3'W x 3'H, but an enclosure of 8'L x 4'W x 4'H or larger may be better for larger individuals. Bigger is always better as long as you are setting up the enclosure properly.

Due to the unique needs of Carpet Pythons, it can sometimes be easiest to create a custom enclosure rather than purchasing one. Based on experience, front open enclosures are generally best for reptiles to avoid reaching into the enclosure from the top which can startle a reptile, and it also makes it easier to perform enclosure maintenance tasks. However, front open enclosures can

make it difficult to remove the snake from the enclosure if you have an individual that likes to spend most of their time in their branches, meaning it would be helpful to have lockable doors on both the top and front of the enclosure.

Substrate

There are many options for substrate. One of the best options available is 40% organic topsoil, 40% ReptiSoil (from ZooMed), 20% play sand. Other substrate options include ReptiSoil, Eco Earth, Plantation Soil, and Bio Dude's Terra Firma Bioactive Kit. Substrate should be 2-4" deep and have a layer of leaf litter on top. Substrate should be spot cleaned daily and full cleaned every 3-4 months

Enclosure Setup & Decor

Decorations are essential in Carpet Python enclosures to provide enrichment, help make the snake feel safe, stimulate exercise, and ward off boredom. Carpet Pythons need sturdy branches, plant cover, and 2 hides at a minimum, but if you can include more that is always better. Cork bark can also be added.

When it comes to foliage, you can add live plants, but artificial plants tend to hold up better, since the snake will squish live plants when they slither over them.

When adding branches, be sure to place them in a way that will allow for vertical climbing, and be sure to secure them to avoid them falling on and hurting the snake.

A water bowl large enough for the snake to fit into while coiled up is also good to have in the enclosure. Many Carpet Pythons will drink from a water dish, and they will also bathe in their water dish prior to shedding. All water should be supplemented with ReptiSafe.

Temperature, Humidity, & Lighting

Carpet Pythons need multiple life support systems to maintain a proper environment.

Linear UVB is a must with Carpet Pythons and should be provided by the ZooMed Reptisun T5HO 5.0 or Arcadia Forest 6% in a reflective fixture. To avoid overexposure, the basking branch should be 9-11" away from the bulb if it's resting on a mesh top, or 12-15" away if the UVB is inside of the enclosure with a 6.5 solarmeter to ensure that UVB levels are adequate.

Carpet Pythons do require a temperature gradient when it comes to heating. Their basking area should be 95-100 °F, the ambient temperature on the warm side should be 87-90°F, the cool side should be 75-80°F, and nighttime temperatures should be 72-78°F. In the winter, you can decrease temperatures by 5-10°F to aid in natural seasonal hormone changes. These temperatures can be achieved with Halogen Flood Lamps on a thermostat and dimmer. Always plug lights into a surge protector. In many cases, 2 halogen lights will be needed, and if that is still not enough, you can increase light wattage. When creating your gradient, be sure to put your heat to one side of the enclosure, and not over the center of the tank to ensure that there is a warm side and a cool side.

With a large enclosure, supplemental lighting will also be needed, even after adding UVB and heat lights. Grow lights are a great option for providing extra lighting to make sure that the snake is able

to achieve a full day/night cycle.

Humidity should be between 40-60%, with a humid hide also added to the enclosure for the snake to freely go into when needed.

Diet

Carpet pythons are constrictors that feed primarily on birds, lizards, and small mammals, including small dogs & cats in the wild.

In captivity, many keepers feed rats to their Carpet Pythons. Feeder rats should be the width of the widest part of the body. Variety is important in order to provide a well-balanced diet and enrichment to keep your snake mentally stimulated. Feeder options that can be given in captivity include mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, smaller guinea pigs, chicks, reptilinks, and more.

Feeders should be thawed to 100 °F in a plastic bag placed in water. When feeding, be sure to never place your hands in the enclosure, and use tongs to feed the snake while keeping your hands at a safe distance.

Handling

Carpet Pythons can be a very docile snake species once they have been trained. While they may be nippy and defensive as juveniles, they can be tamed down to be very calm and tolerant snakes. It's helpful to use tools, such as snake hooks, when training your snake, especially to prevent feeding responses.



Polyester 'Poly' the Carpet Python

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