



Ladder Snake Care Sheet:

Species Name:

Rhinechis scalaris

Adult size:

45-60 inches

Lifespan:

15-20 Years

Breeding age:

2-4 years



Rhinechis scalaris, commonly known as the ladder snake or European ratsnake, is a slender, non-venomous serpent native to Southern Europe and North Africa. With a distinctive ladder-like pattern adorning its back, it's adept at blending into its surroundings for camouflage. It preys on a variety of small mammals, birds, and reptiles, using constriction to subdue its prey. Though often mistaken for venomous species, it poses no threat to humans. Ladder snakes play a crucial ecological role in controlling rodent populations. However, habitat loss and fragmentation pose significant threats to their survival, highlighting the importance of conservation efforts.

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Housing:

Enclosure: A spacious terrarium or vivarium is essential. A mid-large plastic breeding box is suitable for hatchlings however, they will quickly outgrow these and will be much happier as an adult in a 3-4ft wooden vivarium. Ensure secure ventilation and escape-proof locks.

Substrate: Use a substrate like aspen bedding, cypress mulch, or coconut coir to mimic their natural environment. Maintain a depth that allows burrowing.

Hides: Provide multiple hiding spots on both the warm and cool sides of the enclosure. This helps reduce stress and provides a sense of security.

Temperature and Lighting:

Temperature: Maintain a temperature gradient. The warm side should be around 30-32°C while the cool side can be around 24-26°C. Use an under-tank heating pad or heat lamp to achieve this gradient.

Lighting: Ladder Snakes will be happy with standard lighting from a heat bulb or ambient lighting from your home, they have no requirements for UVB however, if you chose to add UV lighting Ladder Snakes require Ferguson zone 2 lighting.

Humidity:

Keep the overall humidity levels in the range of 40% to 50%. This range simulates the conditions of their natural habitat, which includes varying humidity levels in different environments.

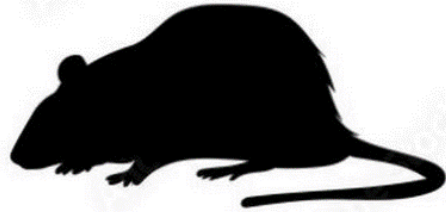
Humid Hide: Create a designated humid hide on the cooler side of the enclosure. This hide should have a substrate that retains moisture well, such as sphagnum moss or coconut coir. This area allows your snake to retreat when shedding its skin or when it needs a boost in humidity.

Shedding Assistance: If your snake is having difficulty shedding, increasing the humidity temporarily can be beneficial. You can do this by lightly misting the enclosure or providing a damp box.


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Feeding:

Diet: Ladder snakes are carnivorous, and their diet consists mainly of appropriately sized mice or rats. Hatchlings can be fed pinkie mice, while adults may consume larger prey. Feed juveniles every 5-7 days, and adults every 10-14 days.



Handling:

Handle your snake regularly to build trust and reduce stress. Avoid handling immediately after feeding to prevent regurgitation.

Health and Maintenance:

Health Check: Regularly inspect your snake for signs of shedding problems, mites, or any health issues. Ensure proper humidity during shedding.

Shedding: Provide a humid hide during shedding to aid in the process. If your snake is having difficulty shedding, consult a vet.

Cleanliness: Keep the enclosure clean by removing waste promptly, and perform a more thorough clean at least once a month.

Behaviour:

Ladder snakes are generally docile, making them excellent pets for both beginners and experienced reptile keepers. They are known for their climbing abilities, so provide branches or other climbing structures.

Successfully caring for a Ladder snake involves creating a habitat that mimics their natural environment and maintaining optimal conditions for their physical and mental well-being. Regular observation and interaction will foster a strong bond between you and your captivating serpent companion. Always consult with a veterinarian experienced in reptile care for specific health concerns or questions.

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A green silhouette of a lizard, positioned above the text. The lizard is facing left and has its tail curved downwards and to the right, forming a loop that underlines the text.