



## Texas Rat Snake Care Sheet:

**Species Name:**

*Elaphe obsoleta lindheimeri*

**Adult size:**

4-6ft

**Lifespan:**

10-15 years

**Breeding age:**

2 years



The Texas rat snake (*Pantherophis obsoletus*) is a non-venomous snake native to the central United States, particularly Texas. It is known for its adaptability to various habitats, including forests, grasslands, and suburban areas. Typically measuring between 4 to 6 feet in length, this snake exhibits a colour pattern ranging from yellow to olive, often with dark blotches. It primarily feeds on rodents, birds, and eggs, contributing to controlling pest populations. While generally non-aggressive, it may exhibit defensive behaviours if threatened.

## Housing:

**Enclosure:** A spacious terrarium or vivarium is essential. A 24"x18"x18" vivarium is suitable for hatchlings, but adult Rat Snakes require at least a 36"x18"x18" vivarium. Ensure secure ventilation and escape-proof locks.

**Substrate:** Use a substrate like orchid bark or coconut coir to maintain a suitable level of humidity in the vivarium.

**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°C while the cool side can be around 23°C. Use an under-tank heating pad or heat lamp to achieve this gradient.

**Lighting:** Texas Rat Snakes are primarily crepuscular, meaning they are most active during dawn and dusk. A natural light cycle is sufficient, but you can use a low-wattage Ferguson Zone 2 UVB light for added enrichment.

## Humidity:

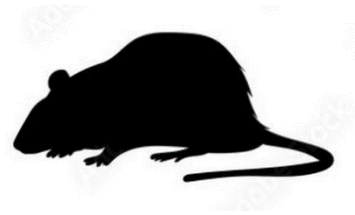
Keep the overall humidity levels in the range of 50% to 70%. This range simulates the conditions of their natural habitat, which includes varying humidity levels in different environments.

**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.

**Hygrometer:** Use a reliable hygrometer to monitor humidity levels accurately. This tool will help you make adjustments as needed, ensuring your snake's comfort and preventing respiratory issues.

## Feeding:

**Diet:** Rat 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 Rat 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:**

These can be temperamental, often times they can hiss and strike however, with regular handling they calm down nicely and make excellent pets when they reach maturity. Do not mistake these behaviours for aggression, be patient and your snake will outgrow their bad temper!

Successfully caring for a Texas Rat 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.