



# African File Snake

*Mehelya crossi*

## Care Sheet

### Average Size

3 - 5 feet long

### Average Lifespan

15 - 20 years

### Diet

African File Snakes are strict carnivores. In the wild they eat lizards, snakes, frogs, and rodents. In captivity they can easily transition into a rodent only diet. They can eat either frozen or live prey items. Babies will start with newborn pinky mice. An adult will eat small to medium rats. When feeding frozen prey, be sure the prey is thawed thoroughly. When feeding live prey, be sure to monitor the feeding to prevent the prey from attacking the snake.

### Feeding

Feed babies 1 - 2 times a week. At 2-3 months of age you can reduce to once weekly. Adults can eat weekly, although some keepers feed every other week. The prey size should equal the largest part of the snake's body in girth.

### Housing

**Habitat** - African File Snakes are native to South Africa where they are found in dense forest. In the wild they are found hiding under logs, rocks, and in holes. African File Snakes should be kept alone. African File Snakes are known snake eaters. Housing them together could result in one snake being eaten by another. During breeding, African File Snakes may be housed together. Pay attention to the mating to ensure the snakes do not attempt to eat one another.

**Size** - African File Snakes are a ground dwelling snake, and their cage should reflect a ground dwelling environment. An adult must have a minimum cage size of 36" Long x 18" Deep x 12" High, although many keepers prefer a larger cage. Babies can start in 10-gallon tanks.

**Substrate** - Due to humidity requirements, coconut fiber or peat moss are perfect substrates. These substrates hold humidity and are easy to clean. Since this species does not generally burrow, a thinner substrate of 2 - 4 inches is acceptable.

**Temperature** - African File Snakes require a basking spot of 80°- 85°F. The cool end of the tank can be as cool as 65°- 70°F. Proper temperature is extremely important with this species. If an African File Snake becomes too cool for an extended period of time, they will quickly develop respiratory infections. If the temperature exceeds 85°F it can easily cause distress and regurgitation.

**Humidity** - Humidity levels should be at least 70%.

**Watering** - Provide fresh drinking water daily. This species will sometimes soak their body in water. Provide a bowl of water large enough so that the snake can fully submerge its body.

**Lighting** - Since this is a nocturnal species, it requires only one light bulb. This is the heat lamp which also emits UVA. There is no current proof that the animal requires UVB light, although some keepers prefer to provide UVB.

**Plant and Fish bulbs are not UVB bulbs.**



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