



Care Sheet

Tarahumara Mountain Boa - Boa Sigma (locality specific)

The Boa genus contains three genetically distinct species, the Boa Imperator (the most common pet), Boa Constrictor (true red tail), & Boa Sigma. The Boa Sigma only contains two localities: The Sonoran Boa & the Tarahumara Mountain Boa. The Boa Sigma is a true dwarf. The Tarahumara Mountain Boa is found in a small insular mountain range within the Sonoran Desert.

Boa Sigma is native to the west coast of Mexico. While it was once included in the class of Boa Imperator, new evidence has discovered it to be a genetically distinct species with independent origins of insular dwarfism. Dwarf boas evolved in genetic isolation and they live in a hostile environment with limited resources so they adapt for survival through dwarfism. Dwarf Boas survive with very little nourishment compared to their larger counterparts. Most Sonoran boas will have a large dark head spear which is a trademark of their species. Sometimes the spear will have a cross from eye to eye. The Tarahumara almost exclusively has the cross from eye to eye. They are the smallest of the dwarf boas. They are smaller than your typical Sonoran and have no morphs. Females are breeding size by 2.5 years and 38 inches in length, males are even smaller.

References: <https://reptifiles.com/boa-constrictor-care/boa-species-subspecies/>
& The New Complete Boa Constrictor by Vin Russo
<http://www.herp.mx/pubs/2016-Card-et-al-Boa.pdf>

Housing: Dwarf Boas are more arboreal than their standard counterparts and should be provided with climbing branches within their enclosure for basking. This will allow them to stretch and use their muscles. Caging should be large enough that the boa can stretch down one side or across the enclosure to full body length. While a basking UVB light is not necessary it will be beneficial if able to be provided. These boas will bask in the “sunshine” very readily.

Temperatures: Boas that inhabit the Sonora Desert have remarkable adaptability with temperature extremes within their home range as high as 110F in the summer and down to 50F at night during the winter. They inhabit dry lowlands as well as high altitude forests where temps can drop into the 40s at night. Ideal basking temperatures will be in the low to mid 80s with a hot spot range 85-88. All heat sources should be regulated via thermostat. 60% humidity is desirable. These are extremely hardy, easy to care for snakes.

Food & Water: Dwarf boas commonly do not eat a lot & can be happy with small meals every few weeks or a larger meal less often. Dwarf Boas can become obese quite quickly in captivity & their weight needs to be maintained carefully. Your dwarf boa should retain a rectangular shape. Should it become rounded on the sides, cut back on food. Snakes will build fat around their organs long before the fat is visible to the outside of the snake. A Dwarf will never gain the length & mass of a standard boa, they will instead become overweight and it will drastically shorten their life span. Always provide a clean water dish in the enclosure. The water dish should be large enough for the boa to occasionally soak themselves.

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