

“Shadow” the Ball Python

General Ball Python Information

Scientific Name

Python regius

Size/Life Span

3-5 feet. 20+ years in the wild, 40+ years in captivity.

Range

Grasslands, savannahs, and sparsely wooded areas of Africa such as Guinea, Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan.

Diet

Mice, rats, shrews, and occasionally birds.

Breeding

Females only breed once every 2-3 years and lay 3-11 eggs that hatch after about 60 days.

Population Status

Though not considered at risk yet, the ball python population in the wild is slowly dwindling due to the pet trade and local collection for food and leather.

Survival Skills

The ball python is generally a terrestrial or ground species of snake. They rely heavily on their skin patterns to stay camouflaged and avoid notice from predators. If they are found, the ball python can coil into an extremely tight ball, keeping its head and neck confined to the inside. In this manner, ball pythons can literally be rolled around on the ground without being hurt.

About Shadow

Shadow was donated to the GNC as a young snake nearly 15 years ago. She is 4 feet long and weighs a hefty 5 pounds. Shadow is a favorite among the GNC staff for programs and outreaches due to her gentle disposition. She is also one of the easiest snakes to handle. Some snakes constantly try to slither out of your hands but Shadow is usually content wrapping herself around your hand and arm to be displayed for the public. Ball pythons are nocturnal so during the day she is found being true to her species, lying curled up in a tight ball under her wooden shelter. Shadow is a constrictor and non-venomous.



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