
California King Snake

Lampropeltis getual californiae

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Colubridae

Characteristics: Shiny black with white, chain-like markings on body and crisscross pattern of white or yellow lines. Stomach checkered in black and yellow. May vary widely in appearance. Can be ringed, striped or spotted and any shade of black or brown. Relatively small subspecies of Common King snake 2.5-3.5 ft in length. Has smooth scales and a single anal plate.

Behavior: Non-venomous species that loops around, constricts and squeezes prey until it suffocates. Generally diurnal but will become nocturnal if too hot. Will refuse to eat frozen items which can cause frostbite. Solitary except in hibernation. May excrete musk and fecal contents when handled which occurs more often in females. Hides under logs or stones and will hide head, hiss, rattle tail or roll into a ball when disturbed. Sheds 4-6 times per year though juveniles may shed monthly. Snakes in shared enclosures may try to eat one another.

Reproduction: Oviparous internal fertilization animal referring to laying eggs vs live birth. Mating begins in Spring with males competing for females by vibrating uncontrollably. 8-13 inch hatchlings emerge in 40-65 days from a clutch of 5-12 eggs. Striped, spotted or banded coloring often occurs within offspring from same clutch of eggs.

Diet:

Wild: small mammals, turtles, birds, eggs, lizards, frogs, other snakes.
Zoo: Mice

Conservation: IUCN status and CITES Appendix not listed. Common in natural habitat but considered invasive species in Europe introduced by accidental or deliberate release of individuals bred in captivity.

FYI: -Scientific name means "Shiny Skin." AKA: Chain Snakes, Chain Kings.
-The "King" in the name refers to hunting and consuming other snakes, including venomous snakes that are indigenous to their habitat.
-In the presence of a king snake, a rattler will neither strike nor rattle but will lie with head low and raise center part of body in a loop with which it will strike heavy blows to the king snake.
-Benefits of snakes include controlling rodent and frog populations, killing rattlesnakes.



Range & Habitat:

Forest, woodlands, chaparrals, grasslands, marshes, farmlands, deserts, and suburban areas



Lifespan: 15-20 years in captivity, unknown in the wild.

Special Adaptations:
Natural immunity to venom of poisonous snakes

IUCN Conservation Status:
Not Evaluated

