

Green Tree Python (*Morelia viridis*)

Habitat and Distribution: Forests of New Guinea, parts of Indonesia and the Cape York Peninsula of Australia.

Size: Up to 7 feet

Wild Diet: Small mammals, occasionally smaller reptiles.

Predators: Raptors, such as the harpy eagle

Life Span: 20+ years (captive life span)

Reproduction: These snakes lay 12-23 leathery eggs which are incubated and protected by the female. She coils around the eggs and shivers to raise her body temperature, and thus the temperature of the eggs. The hatchlings are typically a bright yellow color with purple and brown stripes and spots. Occasionally there are orange, red, blue or gold colored hatchlings. These colors gradually turn to green over the next 6-8 months.

Behavior: These snakes are entirely arboreal. They loop coils of their body over a branch and place their head in the center when resting. They capture prey by holding onto a branch with their prehensile tail and striking out from an s-shaped position.

Conservation Connection: Currently listed as CITES Appendix II, meaning that they are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled. Threats include logging, habitat loss and hunting for their skin as well as for food and folk medicine.

Interesting Facts: Because of their appearance and habit of resting on branches in coiled loops, they are often confused with the emerald tree boa, *Corallus caninus*, of South America.

