

Emerald Tree Boa

(*Corallus caninus*)

Habitat and Distribution: Found in the rainforests of the Amazon Basin from Venezuela through Brazil to northern Bolivia.

Size: Up to 10 feet (Average 4-6 feet)

Wild Diet: Birds, rats, monkeys, bats, squirrels and lizards.

Predators: Eagles (harpy and guianan crested)

Life Span: 15 to 25 years in captivity

Reproduction: Gestation period is more than 250 days. They give live birth to 10-20 baby snakes, each of which is a foot long and weighs about 1½ oz. The young are given no maternal care and fend for themselves from birth. When the babies are born, they are shades of yellow, orange or red, but their color gradually changes to green as they mature. They gain their full green coloration by about four months of age.

Behavior: Strictly arboreal and mostly nocturnal. Emerald tree boas live solitary lives except when mating. They kill their prey by constriction or may just crush prey with their strong teeth and jaws. Long powerful fore teeth enable tree boas to penetrate the feathers of birds and hold onto them so that they won't drop them to the ground in the process of trying to eat them. Heat sensing organs on the upper lip help the snakes locate its prey and detect nearby predators. To climb trees, they hold onto a tree trunk or branch with their tail and reach up with their head. They wrap their head around a higher branch or place on the trunk, then let go with their tail. Lastly, they pull the rear part of their body up to the level of the head and repeat the process over again until they are at the desired height.

Conservation Connection: Secure, however their rainforest home is vulnerable.

Interesting Facts: These snakes have a large, bulky head, thin neck, stout body and strong prehensile tail. Their pupils are vertically oriented like a cat. The exact color and pattern varies by region, but in general, adults have brilliant green coloration with white/yellow underside and whitish or yellowish bands or blotches.

