



## BALL PYTHON

**Kingdom:** *Animalia* **Phylum:** *Chordata* **Class:** *Reptilia* **Order:** *Squamata* **Family:** *Boidae*  
*Python regius*

**Description:** Also known as the Royal Python, these snakes have a pattern of blotches with shades of yellow or gold on brown or bluish brown color. There is some iridescence.

**Length:** 3-5 feet

**Habitat:** Forest and savannah regions

**Distribution:** Equatorial West Africa

**Diet:** Rodents

**Life Span:** 20-30 years

**Status:** Threatened

### Special Characteristics:

- When threatened, it curls itself into a ball with its head inside the coils. The ball is so tight it can be rolled along the ground.
- Spend some time in the trees and bushes.
- Excellent swimmers, they have the ability to pump air into their bodies for flotation. When they want to dive, they simply release air.
- Constrictors, they seek out food with the aid of a heat sensing pits located in the scales boarding their mouths.
- They are primitive snakes that still possess a pelvic girdle and "vestigial" limbs (remnants of hind legs)
- These snakes have upwards of 100 "recurved" teeth (curved inward), which are used to hold prey until the snake can kill them by constriction.
- They swallow their food whole.
- Nocturnal
- Some African cultures hold the Ball Pythons to be sacred.

### Reproduction:

- They are oviparous and the female will take over a mammal burrow or other retreat and coil around the eggs to incubate and protect them.
- Eggs are large and there are 6-7 in a batch
- Incubation is 3 months.
- Sexual maturity is between 18 months and 4 years.
- At birth the pythons are able to hunt and constrict
- They mate every 2-3 years.

