



False Water Cobra Care Sheet:

Species Name:

Hydrodynastes gigas

Adult size:

7-10 ft

Lifespan:

10-15 Years

Breeding age:

3 years



The false water cobra (*Hydrodynastes gigas*) is a large, rear-fang venomous snake native to South America. Despite its name, it is not a true cobra, though it can flatten its neck to resemble one when threatened. This behaviour mimics a cobra's hood, hence the name. False water cobras are semi-aquatic, often found near rivers and swamps, and are excellent swimmers. They can grow up to 10 feet long and are typically brown or olive with dark banding. Although rear-fanged, their venom poses little danger to humans.

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Housing:

Enclosure: A spacious terrarium or vivarium is essential. Ideally, a 4-5ft wooden vivarium will provide this snake with enough room to exercise. Ensure secure ventilation and escape-proof locks.

Substrate: Use a substrate like bark chips, forest soil, or coconut coir to mimic their natural environment. Maintain a depth that allows burrowing.

Hides: Provide multiple hiding spots on both the warm and cool sides of the enclosure. This helps reduce stress and provides a sense of security.

Temperature and Lighting:

Temperature: Maintain a temperature gradient. The warm side should be around 30-32°C while the cool side can be around 24-26°C. Use an under-tank heating pad or heat lamp to achieve this gradient.

Lighting: False Water Cobras will be happy with standard lighting from a heat bulb or ambient lighting from your home, they have no requirements for UVB.

Humidity:

Keep the overall humidity levels in the range of 60% to 70%. This range simulates the conditions of their natural habitat, which includes varying humidity levels in different environments.

Humid Hide: Create a designated humid hide on the cooler side of the enclosure. This hide should have a substrate that retains moisture well, such as sphagnum moss or coconut coir. This area allows your snake to retreat when shedding its skin or when it needs a boost in humidity.

Shedding Assistance: If your snake is having difficulty shedding, increasing the humidity temporarily can be beneficial. You can do this by lightly misting the enclosure or providing a damp box.



Feeding:

Diet: False Water Cobras are carnivorous, and their diet consists mainly of appropriately sized mice or rats. Hatchlings can be fed pinkie mice, while adults may consume larger prey. Feed juveniles every 5-7 days, and adults every 10-14 days.



Handling:

Handle your snake regularly to build trust and reduce stress. Avoid handling immediately after feeding to prevent regurgitation. These snakes can be snappy, so they are best suited to confident and experienced handlers.

Health and Maintenance:

Health Check: Regularly inspect your snake for signs of shedding problems, mites, or any health issues. Ensure proper humidity during shedding.

Shedding: Provide a humid hide during shedding to aid in the process. If your snake is having difficulty shedding, consult a vet.

Cleanliness: Keep the enclosure clean by removing waste promptly, and perform a more thorough clean at least once a month.

Behaviour:

False Water Cobras are quite defensive and can be snappy, especially when they are young. They are inquisitive, which can sometimes be mistaken for aggression, so be patient and learn your snake's personality. Hook training can be a great way of fostering trust between both the snake and the owner, it also allows them to differentiate handling and cleaning from feeding.

Successfully caring for a False water cobra involves creating a habitat that mimics their natural environment and maintaining optimal conditions for their physical and mental well-being. Regular observation and interaction will foster a strong bond between you and your captivating serpent companion. Always consult with a veterinarian experienced in reptile care for specific health concerns or questions.

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A green silhouette of a lizard, positioned above the text. Its tail is curled into a loop that underlines the text.