



# Carpet Pythons

*Morelia spilota*

INTERMEDIATE · 5-9 FT ADULT · 15-25 YR LIFESPAN · SEMI-ARBOREAL · AUSTRALIA & NEW GUINEA

If the ball python is the family sedan, the carpet is the sports model: long, lean, semi-arboreal, from Australia and New Guinea, and it actually uses the space you give it. One name, many subspecies (Jungle, Coastal, Diamond, Bredl's, Irian Jaya), all worth staring at. Honest headline: hatchlings are nippy and adults are a lot of snake. Height, sturdy branches, and patience turn most into calm, handleable display animals.

| AT A GLANCE     |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Difficulty      | Intermediate               |
| Adult size      | 5-9 ft (subspecies varies) |
| Lifespan        | 15-25 years                |
| Ambient temp    | 78-84 °F (72-76 °F night)  |
| Basking spot    | 88-92 °F                   |
| Humidity        | 50-70%                     |
| UVB             | Low output, beneficial     |
| Diet            | Frozen/thawed mice & rats  |
| Feeding cadence | Every 7-14 days            |



Carpet python variety is a NARBC show staple: Jungle, Coastal, Diamond, Bredl's. Pattern and size vary widely by subspecies and locality.

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## 01

### The Nippy Phase Passes

Hatchling carpets earn their reputation. Quick to strike, all bluster, teeth like velcro hooks. What the reputation leaves out: they grow out of it. With calm, brief, regular handling, most mature into steady, confident snakes that ride your arms instead of tagging them. Move slowly, support the body, and don't take the defensiveness personally. An adult is long, strong, and all muscle; handle big animals with respect and a second point of support.

## 02

### Housing: Think Vertical

Carpets are semi-arboreal, and Habitat-OS calls for vertical orientation at every life stage. **Height and sturdy, well-anchored branches are core equipment, not decor.** A carpet needs a perch it can fully coil on. Hatchlings can start modest; racks are conditional at best and off the table from subadult on. Plan for the adult early: subspecies vary widely in size, and a big Coastal will use every inch of a 72×24×48. One snake per enclosure, always.

| STAGE     | MINIMUM  | PREFERRED | NOTES                                                         |
|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hatchling | 20×12×18 | 24×18×24  | Defensive and nippy at this stage; they mellow with age.      |
| Juvenile  | 24×18×24 | 36×18×36  | Climbing structure is critical: branches before floor space.  |
| Subadult  | 48×24×36 | 48×24×48  | Size diverges by subspecies now; Coastals run largest.        |
| Adult     | 48×24×48 | 72×24×48  | Vertical orientation with sturdy branches; bioactive-capable. |

Habitat-OS life-stage guidance. Enclosure sizes in inches, L×W×H. For carpets, height counts.

03

## Heat & Light

Run the enclosure 78–84 °F ambient with an 88–92 °F basking spot, and let nights ease down to 72–76 °F. Carpets come from climates with real day-night swing and take the drop in stride. Because they perch, heat from above: a halogen or radiant panel over a sturdy basking branch beats floor heat, and every heat source runs on a thermostat, no exceptions. Low-level UVB is beneficial for carpets; mount it over the basking area so heat and light agree.

04

## Humidity & Water

Target 50–70% humidity, a forgiving band for a species that spans arid scrubland to tropical forest. Most homes hit it with a large water bowl and occasional misting during shed; in dry climates, deeper substrate helps hold moisture. What carpets don't forgive is a permanently wet cage: constant damp breeds scale rot and respiratory trouble faster than dryness ever will. A raspy, incomplete shed is your cue to nudge humidity toward the top of the range.

05

## Furnish for a Climber

Carpets do well on a moisture-managing substrate like cypress mulch, coco chip, or a bioactive soil mix, and the species is fully bioactive-capable if you want a planted display. But spend your real budget above the floor: multiple secured branches at different heights, a perch near the basking zone and a cooler one below, plus cover at height so the snake can hide off the ground. A carpet that never climbs isn't calm; it's under-furnished.

06

## Feeding an Easy Eater

Carpets are enthusiastic rodent eaters: mice for young snakes, rats as they grow, frozen/thawed always, on a 7–14 day cadence. That enthusiasm is the trap; a big feeding response gets read as hunger, and carpet pythons become obese in captivity with depressing ease. An adult perched and cruising at night is behaving normally, not begging. Feed on schedule, size prey to the snake's midbody, and use hook training so a reaching hand stops meaning dinner.

07

## Health Red Flags

Wheezing, clicking breaths, open-mouth breathing, or nostril bubbles mean respiratory infection, usually from a setup too cold or too damp. That's a reptile-vet visit, not wait-and-see. Check new snakes for mites: black specks at eyes and chin, or dead ones in the water bowl. Stopped climbing, weeks on the floor, dropping weight. It's telling you something. Weigh monthly and log it; a slow slide is the earliest symptom you'll get.

Husbandry data: Habitat-OS species library. Structure follows the NARBC show handout series. Every animal is an individual — when in doubt, ask the breeder at the table or a reptile veterinarian.