**YVCipedia REPTILE**

Carpet Python Care Sheet

## **Species Overview**

The **Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota*)** is a non-venomous constrictor native to Australia, New Guinea, and parts of Indonesia. Known for its striking coloration, which resembles an ornate carpet, this species comes in several regional subspecies, each with slightly different size and pattern traits. Common types include the Coastal Carpet Python, Irian Jaya, Jungle Carpet, and Diamond Python.

Carpet pythons are moderately large snakes that are **active, intelligent, and visually striking**. Adults typically reach **6–9 feet in length**, though some coastal subspecies may grow larger. They can live **20–30+ years in captivity**, making them a long-term commitment. While not typically aggressive, carpet pythons can be defensive as juveniles and require regular, calm handling to become well-socialized.

## **Housing & Environment**

Carpet pythons are semi-arboreal and require a habitat that offers both climbing space and ground room. Enclosure size should reflect their adult dimensions and allow for environmental enrichment.

### **Enclosure Requirements**

* **Juveniles:** 20–40 gallon enclosure or equivalent-sized PVC/terrarium
* **Adults:** Minimum 4’x2’x2’ enclosure; larger preferred for very active individuals
* Escape-proof, front-opening terrariums are ideal for ease of access
* Provide secure climbing branches, ledges, and multiple hides
* Substrate: aspen, cypress mulch, coconut husk, or paper-based bedding

Spot-clean daily, and replace substrate every 4–6 weeks or as needed. Ensure adequate ventilation and secure lids or doors.

## **Heating, Lighting & Humidity**

Carpet pythons require a thermal gradient to regulate their body temperature effectively. A proper setup mimics the warm daytime conditions of their native environment.

### **Temperature**

* **Basking spot:** 88–92°F
* **Cool side ambient:** 75–80°F
* **Nighttime drop:** 70–75°F
* Use overhead heat sources (ceramic emitters or basking bulbs) on thermostats

### **Lighting**

* Carpet pythons do not require UVB to survive but may benefit from low-intensity UVB lighting for overall health
* Use a 12-hour day/night cycle with a low-output UVB bulb if desired
* Full-spectrum LED lighting can improve visibility and activity

### **Humidity**

* Maintain **50–60% humidity**; increase to 70% during shedding
* Provide a large water bowl for drinking and humidity
* Mist lightly if necessary, but avoid overly damp conditions

Monitor humidity with a digital hygrometer and provide a humidity hide if needed.

## **Diet & Feeding**

Carpet pythons are constrictors that feed exclusively on whole prey. They require a **consistent feeding schedule** based on age, size, and metabolic rate.

### **Feeding Guidelines**

* **Juveniles:** Feed appropriately sized mice or rat pups every 5–7 days
* **Adults:** Feed small to medium rats every 10–14 days
* Prey should be no larger than 1–1.5x the width of the snake’s widest part
* Offer pre-killed or frozen-thawed prey for safety and convenience

Always supervise feedings and avoid handling for 24–48 hours post-meal to reduce regurgitation risk.

## **Behavior & Handling**

Carpet pythons are **alert, curious, and can be quite active**, especially at dusk and dawn. With consistent handling, they can become calm and handleable, though juveniles may be defensive.

* Handle gently but with confidence
* Support the snake’s body fully, especially when coiled
* Avoid sudden movements or approaching from above (predatory perspective)
* Regular handling promotes a more relaxed temperament over time

Some individuals may retain a food response, especially during feeding days—use a hook to gently tap or guide the snake out of feeding mode before handling.

## **Health & Veterinary Care**

Routine veterinary care is important to prevent and catch early signs of illness. Carpet pythons generally have good longevity and hardiness with proper care.

### **Common Health Concerns**

* Respiratory infections (wheezing, bubbles from nostrils, open-mouth breathing)
* Mites or skin infections from poor hygiene
* Regurgitation from improper temps, handling post-feed, or large prey
* Mouth rot (stomatitis)
* Retained sheds or eye caps from low humidity
* Internal parasites (especially in wild-caught individuals)

Schedule annual wellness exams with a reptile-savvy veterinarian. Quarantine any new arrivals for 60–90 days.

## **Enrichment**

These intelligent snakes benefit from physical and visual enrichment to support natural behaviors.

* Provide sturdy branches and climbing perches
* Use varied textures and tunnel-like hides
* Rotate décor or alter feeding methods for stimulation
* Create naturalistic habitats with bioactive substrate (optional for experienced keepers)

## **Facts & FAQs**

* Carpet pythons are constrictors, not venomous, and pose no danger when handled properly
* Most are semi-arboreal and enjoy climbing structures
* They have excellent eyesight and a strong feeding response
* Carpet pythons are native to Australia and are common in both wild and captive settings
* With proper care, they can live over 25 years

## **Supplies Checklist**

* 4’x2’x2’ secure enclosure (larger for adults)
* Basking bulb or ceramic heater on thermostat
* Digital thermometer and hygrometer
* Climbing branches, ledges, and secure hides
* Water dish large enough for soaking
* Safe, clean substrate (aspen, mulch, or paper)
* Tongs for feeding frozen-thawed prey
* Snake hook (especially useful for juveniles or feeding days)
* Reptile-safe disinfectant for cleaning
* Secure carrier for veterinary visits

*Yarmouth Veterinary Center*