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The Diamond Python (*Morelia s. spilota*)

APPEARANCE

The Diamond python is olive black with creamy yellow rosettes along the body, black and yellow patterning along with other variations. They grow to about 4 metres.

LIFESTYLE

Diamond pythons are found across a variety of habitats, often found near wetlands and living in trees, among dense reed beds or in the burrows of other animals. They are nocturnal.

FOOD

Diamond pythons eat a wide range of mammals, birds and occasionally lizards. A Diamond python kills its prey by wrapping itself around its victim and suffocating it.

BREEDING

A female Diamond python lays down a scent trail as she moves around and males pick this up and follow it. The snakes form groups of one or two females and several males. The males all attempt to mate with the females and the strongest sperm from each male will fertilise the eggs. Consequently the hatchlings will have the same mother but very possibly different fathers. They are egg laying and may lay up to 47 eggs in a clutch. The female coils around them to protect them and keep them warm. This maternal care is uncommon in snakes and it ceases once the offsprings hatch. Newly hatched young measure about 300mm.

BITE

Their bite is non-venomous but can be painful. Teeth can break off and remain embedded in the victim.

PROTECTION

The Diamond python is a protected species and a licence is required to keep one as a pet. It is illegal to take them from their natural habitat. While not an endangered species, it is under pressure from habitat destruction.

