



## **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS**

### **INDIAN PYTHON**

#### **ABOUT**

The Indian Python (*Python Molurus*) is primarily a tree-dwelling snake that was once common throughout the jungles of India, Sri Lanka, and the East Indies. One of the world's largest snakes, it can grow over 20 feet long (6 m). Like boas and anacondas, this snake is a constrictor. Its skin pattern comprises black-edged brown patches on a pale orange-brown to yellow-brown background. On the head is a distinctive lighter, forward pointing 'V'. Pythons kill by squeezing and suffocating their prey. Their preferred diet is mammals, but they will eat birds and even fish, since they often live near water and are good swimmers. Pythons can live for 20 years and lead a solitary life until they need to seek a mate. The female Indian python lays as many as 60 eggs in rock crevices or tree holes. She remains with her clutch of eggs throughout the 100-day incubation period and keeps the eggs warm by coiling around them and controlling her body temperature, only leaving them to drink. The hatchlings are 18-24 in (45-60 cm) in length and grow quickly, but have many enemies including eagles, crocodiles, leopards, tigers, and hyenas.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Pythons are the most ancient type of snake, and have remnant spurs where once their ancestors might have had legs. Pythons are fairly docile animals, even in the wild, and as with so many endangered species, the major threat to their numbers is the loss of habitat to the expansion of human populations. Their preferred habitat is scrubland, but with the introduction of modern farming methods in India, these areas are being developed for agricultural use. Pythons are also hunted for their skin to make boots, as well as other popular fashion items. In Asia, people prize python meat for food and as a source of medicine. These snakes have a valuable role in keeping down rodent populations, but human inhabitants rarely appreciate their value, and where the python has been eradicated, rodents that carry disease have become a serious threat to human health. The Indian Python is endangered in Sri Lanka and India.

For more detailed information visit: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) or [www.bagheera.com](http://www.bagheera.com) or [www.earthsendangered.com](http://www.earthsendangered.com).

#### **TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

What is destroying the Indian Python's habitat?

- a) The change in climate
- b) Modern farming methods
- c) Forest fires
- d) Infestation of rats

Answer is B

