



Portsmouth Reptile & Amphibian Society

P.O Box 16

Portsmouth

PO2 9BW

P.R.A.S Care sheet No 9



**Species Common Name:** **Green Racers**

**Scientific Name:** *Gonyosoma Oxycephala*

**Care Difficulty:**

This species is recommended for experienced keepers only, as they are generally quick to bite when removing from the vivarium, and can be at best moderately tame, with occasional bites when handling. This species is much better suited as a display animal. Many specimens of this species are wild caught, often with lots of parasites. These animals do not always adapt well to captivity either, and obtaining captive bred animals can be difficult.

**Distribution:**

Green racers are found over a large range in South East Asia, from Burma in the North West across into the Philippines and throughout Indonesia and Borneo.

**Description:**

These snakes are slim, arboreal snakes that have a range of colours. They range from bright lime green to silver and brown with yellow blotching.

These snakes are found in lowland areas and foothills, and especially in swampy areas. Racers are fast moving snakes that are prone to biting the handler when being removed from the vivarium, and are not generally docile. They do however make stunning display animals, as they usually drape themselves over branches in full view.

**Size:**

Green Racers average out at about 1.5m (5'), but some rare individuals can reach lengths of 2.3m (7.5').

**Housing:**

As these snakes are arboreal, a vivarium with space to climb is a necessity. The size of the vivarium should be about 0.9-1.2m (3-4') long, 0.6m (2') deep and 0.6-0.9m (2-3') high.

It would have to be larger for a pair.

The vivarium should have suitable climbing branches that are properly secured for the snake to climb on.

The daytime general temperature should be about 27°C (80°F) with a basking spot of about 30°C, and the night time temperature can fall to about 24°C (75°F). It is recommended that a ceramic heater at one end of the tank fitted to the roof is used as a heat source, and the temperature directly below it can be 35-37°C (95-100°F). The ceramic heater should be controlled by a good thermostat with probe, and should have a guard around it to prevent the snakes from burning themselves on it.

Humidity is an important factor with keeping *Green Racers*. Ideally, humidity should be kept at 85%. This can be achieved through daily misting, and possibly by utilising moist substrate, as these snakes spend most of their time off of the floor. Daily spraying is important, as some specimens only drink from water droplets.

### **Diet and Feeding:**

In the wild, these snakes have a varied diet, consisting of bats, mice, squirrel and other small mammals, birds and their eggs, lizards and frogs.

In captivity, a diet of appropriately sized mice and rats offered weekly except for when in shed should suffice. Captive bred animals are easier to feed than wild caught examples.

### **Breeding:**

Breeding this species in captivity is difficult, although it has been successfully bred in captivity by many people.

Some will breed without any variations of temperature or humidity, whereas others require a cooling period of about 3 months, where the ambient temperature of the vivarium is lowered to 21°C (70°F), with access to a basking site of 24.5°C (75°F).

Gravid females require a moist, sheltered spot to lay their eggs, a cave, flowerpot or other container filled with damp sphagnum moss will do. Some females require elevated positions to lay their eggs in, as in the wild, they may lay their eggs in tree hollows and such.

### **References:**

Care sheet by Martin Eustace

Keysreptiles.com

Blogs.thatreptileplace.com