



# Corn Snake

## Pantherophis guttatus



### Phoenix

**We aren't exactly sure on my birthday, but I came to the Racine Zoo in 2022 from a local rescue!**

My home is in the Discovery Center, but you may occasionally meet me during an education program as I am one of the zoo's ambassador animals! During the day, I feel most comfortable when I am hiding throughout the various structures in my habitat.

## CORN SNAKES AT A GLANCE

- Corn snakes are a species of rat snake that use constriction to subdue their prey. Though their colorations are similar to the venomous copperhead snake, they are harmless and non-venomous.
- These snakes can be identified by their brighter orange and red colors, slender bodies, round pupils, and lack of heat sensors.
- Chemoreception, or scent ability, is very important to their snake species to detect prey.
- Like many species Colubridae, corn snakes exhibit defensive tail vibration behavior to deter predators.
- At the zoo, our corn snake eats mice.
- In the wild, corn snakes eat small rodents, other reptiles or amphibians, or unguarded bird eggs.



61 - 182cm long



Avg. life expectancy in native habitats: 6 - 8 years

Avg. life expectancy in human care: up to 24 years

## WHERE ARE NATIVE CORN SNAKE HABITATS LOCATED?



Corn snakes can be found in the eastern parts of the United States, ranging from New Jersey to parts of Kentucky and Florida. They prefer to inhabit wooded groves, rocky hillsides, meadowlands, woodlots, rocky open areas, barns and abandoned buildings.

# Corn Snake Behaviors

## HIDING

Corn snakes are solitary creatures. They are active at night and spend most of their daytime underground in burrows or hiding under logs.

During the day, it might be difficult to see me in my home! I usually like to hide under my rock structure or in my white tube.



## BASKING

Since they are cold-blooded animals, corn snakes enjoy basking in the sun to absorb heat.

This is especially important for corn snakes that live in climates that are a little more temperate.

I have a nice warm heat lamp in my habitat to keep me cozy!



## DEFENSE

Corn snakes are typically docile and have small mouths, so their main defense is not to bite. Instead, they will hiss, coil, or assume a defensive posturing.

I may hiss or coil if I am feeling nervous or scared!



## SHEDDING

Adult corn snakes will shed their skin to make room for new growth about every 3 months or so.

My keepers do a great job at keeping my habitat humid to help my shed come off in one full piece!



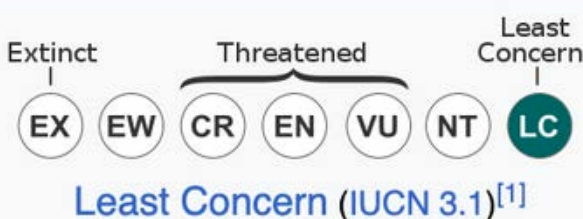
- Corn snakes are constrictors, wrapping themselves around prey to squeeze and subdue it before swallowing it whole.
- The name corn snake may have originated from the markings on their snake's belly, which resemble maize, or Indian corn.
- These snakes have a very docile nature and are usually reluctant to bite, making them good pets and animal ambassadors.
- Corn snakes lack functional venom and help control populations of wild rodent pests that damage crops and spread disease.
- Corn snakes are solitary creatures, they are active at night and spend most of their daytime underground in burrows or hiding under logs.

# Corn Snake Conservation

While wild populations of this snake species are at stable levels currently, in the past the corn snakes have been taken for the pet trade. People have often mistaken this species for the venomous copperhead snakes, thus overhunting them.

Corn snakes are of least concern federally, however they are considered a species of special concern in Florida due to habitat loss and destruction.

## Conservation status



## How can we help?

Corn snakes are very important in their natural habitats and are crucial to controlling wild rodent populations.

We can help wild snake populations by leaving fall leaf litter on the ground to provide shelter and nesting materials. We can also limit our use of pesticide/rodenticide that could cause harm to or be ingested by wild snakes.