

# Reticulated Python

## Where Do We Live?

Reticulated pythons are found in tropical rainforests, wetlands, and grasslands of Asia.

## What Do We Eat?

Juvenile reticulated pythons eat rodents. Adults **prey** on pigs, civets, and birds. Like all snakes, reticulated pythons use their sense of smell to hunt. Forked tongues detect scents and flicks air particles to an organ called the **vomer nasal organ** located on the roof of their mouth.

Reticulated pythons have special organs that can detect radiant heat and can sense their prey without even seeing them.

## What Are My Natural Enemies?

King cobras and crocodiles prey on reticulated pythons. Eggs and juvenile pythons are vulnerable to **predators** such as hawks, eagles, herons, and small mammals. Reticulated pythons are not venomous. The only defense against predators is **constriction** (squeezing).

Reticulated pythons are hunted and sold internationally for their skin and meat and as an exotic pet.

## What Makes Me Unique?

Reticulated pythons have large muscular bodies and patterned skin. The complex geometric design is made up of irregular diamond shapes in olive green, brown, white, and gold, with a black outline. Their patterned skin allows them to **camouflage** in their habitat.

The word **reticulated** means "net" pattern.

You don't have to leave your yard to find reticulated patterns in nature. *Where do you see them?*



## Did You Know?

- Reticulated pythons are the **world's longest snake**. The average is **10-20 feet long**, but can grow to 32 feet.
- Weighing up to **350 pounds**, the reticulated python is one of the **world's 3 heaviest snakes**.
- Though both pythons and boas are large constrictors, they are from separate families.
- A reticulated python defends itself by lifting its head off the ground, hissing loudly, and repeatedly striking.
- Reticulated pythons are excellent swimmers.
- Snakes do not have eyelids. Each eye has a single transparent scale which protects from damage and drying out.
- Like all snakes, reticulated pythons do not have ears. They sense vibrations in the ground using an organ called a **columella**.
- The shedding of skin is called **ecdysis**. All snakes shed as they grow and shed in one piece.
- Reticulated pythons are **ambush hunters** – they hide and surprise their **prey** with an attack.
- The reticulated python is **oviparous**, or egg-laying.
- Hatchlings use an **egg tooth** (a sharp projection on the upper lip) to break out of the shell.
- Reticulated pythons can live 23 years.
- Reticulated pythons are **nocturnal**, or active at night.
- Reticulated pythons have about 100 curved teeth that are hidden inside the gums.

