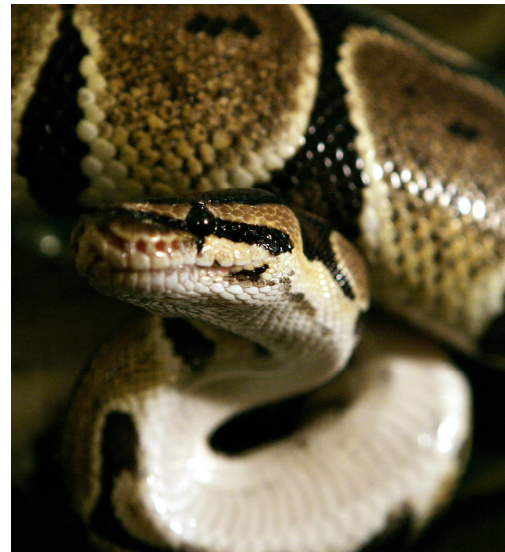


Constrictors

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Ball pythons and Redtail boas are two common species of constrictors that are commonly kept as pets. Ball pythons reach about 4 feet in length and are found at the edges of forests in Central and Western Africa. Redtail Boas are found in Brazil most commonly, with some coming from Surinam, Columbia and the Amazon. They reach about 7 feet in length and can live to be about 30 years old. In captivity, these snakes are fed rats and rabbits when they reach adult size.

These two snakes make good pets due to their calm nature and are recommended for beginners.



Pythons, like the one shown in the above photo and the radio-graph below, have two jaw bones which are not connected that they use independently of each other, "walking" their jaws up the rat's body as they swallow it whole.

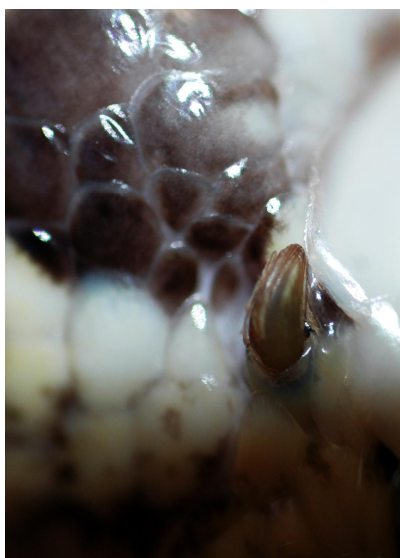
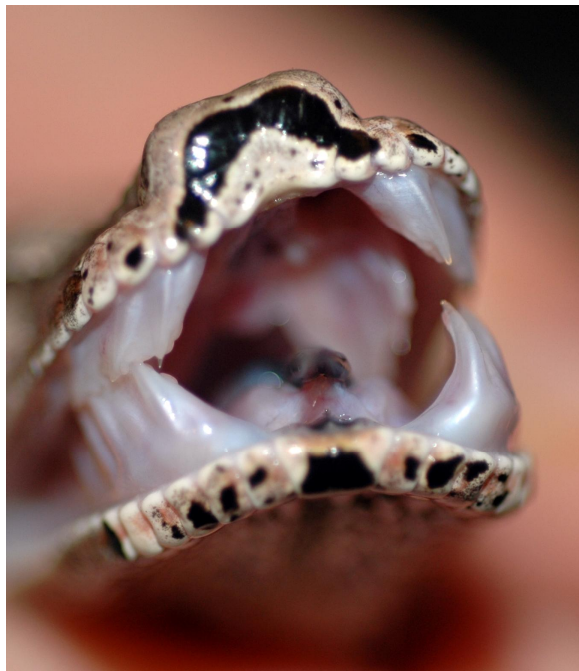


Their jaws are lined with small, hooked teeth that are designed for grabbing and holding prey. The curved shape of their teeth pulls the rat into their jaws, and if the mouse pulls away, the teeth sink deeper into it's flesh.



Two of the main differences between boas and pythons are that boas give birth to live young while pythons lay eggs. There are also more larger species of pythons than boas.

Pythons and boas have primitive vestigial hind legs called "spurs". These are usually larger on males and used during mating to hold



Constrictors are given their name because of how they kill their prey. They strike their prey, wrapping their coils tightly around it until the animal suffocates to death. They then swallow it whole with the use of their special jaws.

All photos and radiographs by Katie Chmielewski © 2006. Information obtained from <http://szgdocent.org> and *Reptiles* by Teddy Moncuit and Karim Daoues.