

RADIANT REPTILES CANADA

QUALITY THAT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF



"Live Wire" NFS

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UPDATES

Hi everyone,

We have a couple more eggs in the incubator and are waiting for more to drop! There are also some re-pairings to take place.

Hatching should start around mid-June 2022 for the first few clutches. It does, however, take several months to get them eating their 10 consecutive meals of frozen-thawed, non-scented pinkies before they'll be available.

In other news - We would love to hear from you! Do you have any questions that would make for great future newsletter topics? If so, please email us at -

RadiantReptilesCanada@gmail.com

or you can PM us via our FB business page. :)

COHABITATING HOGS

To simplify and sum up this topic:

DO NOT COHABITATE YOUR WESTERN HOGNOSES

There is always someone who says they have never had any issues with cohabitating their snakes, and that's great. However, there are just as many, if not far more stories, about people cohabitating and having terrible outcomes. Some people have cohabitated for years until one day one of their snakes has been bitten or eaten. When it comes to cohabitation, many of us say "it's not a problem, until it is."

Remember, snakes are solitary animals. They like their own space and their resources, and most importantly, they do not want to have any competition. Being cold-blooded means that they do not benefit from curling up with each other, neither of them is producing heat for the other. Most often when you see two snakes curled up together in an enclosure, it's either breeding season or they are both trying to use the same heat spot.

When looking into the myths about cohabitating two snakes, the question to ask yourself is: "Is the risk worth it?" "Are you willing to risk any of the involved animal's health?" I do not know anyone who is "OK" with it. But making informed decisions is important for people to choose if the risk is worth it in their situation.

What are the risks?

Cannibalism Western Hognoses, like many snakes, are opportunistic feeders. If they're hungry and something is moving, they might take a taste. Western Hognoses aren't known for hunting down their kind as a preferred meal, but they are known for eating anything that they can get in their mouths. The best-case scenario here is the smaller hognose becomes a meal. The worst-case scenario is that the cannibal chokes, during eating or while regurgitating too large of a meal, either case can result in the loss of two animals.

Bites This could be from a stress response or from attempting a "taste" as mentioned above. Reptiles are very susceptible to infection and can be hard to treat - especially if it was not noticed in time. Something that may only look like a little cut to you can still be life-threatening.

Stress It helps to look at cohabitation from a Western Hognoses' point of view. They are stuck in the same enclosure and have no way to leave the situation. This can affect many things such as - eating habits, sustaining weight, hiding options, and excessive courtship which can be taxing on all animals involved. Regurgitation (throwing up) is always a risk when it comes to stress, which could result in the animal losing nutrients, harming their ribs, choking, imbalanced gut bacteria, dehydration and becoming more prone to infection.



Parasites and unknown diseases Cohabitation can bring a risk of potentially introducing parasites and unknown diseases. Yes, even with properly quarantined animals from trusted sources, and trusted animal food sources. you run the risk of cross-contamination as there are many lethal and non-lethal parasites and diseases that can be hard to detect with an animal remaining asymptomatic for years.

What about cohabitating for short amounts of time? Yes, many breeders/experienced keepers will cohabit with their animals for short periods at different times of the year - such as during the breeding season. This is often done for short amounts of time. Usually for 2-3 days at a time.

Is it safe? No. There is always a risk with any cohabitation of Western Hognoses. Even for short amounts of time, an accident can happen in an instant, whether it's with freshly introduced animals or familiar ones. Experienced keepers and breeders keep these risks in mind, do their best to monitor the situation, and make many different assessments while pairing their animals and do everything they can to prevent any harm coming to them.

To clarify we are not taking shots at any reputable, experienced keepers out there who have done any mentioned practices. We believe that now more than ever with so many people getting into the hobby, people need to be armed with accurate knowledge to make informed decisions for themselves. To say that there are no risks to cohabitating is simply not true. Any amount of time cohabitating is taking a risk.

The following **"MYTH"** statuses assigned are based on any level of risk, whether it's full-on cannibalism, bites/injuries, stress, or contagious diseases/parasites. Let's dive in!

"It is safe to cohabit Western Hognoses, so long as one is male and the other is a female." - **MYTH**

We hear this myth all too often. Many female Western Hognoses (breeding season or not) will not pass up what she thinks could be a meal - this includes their partner! If the male is fortunate he may escape the encounter without injury, or only sustain a bite. In less fortunate instances he may become a snack.

We have had to intervene on more than one occasion with our paired breeding animals. Thankfully we have yet to deal with a male being fully eaten, but we have had males sustain bite injuries and ones who would have been eaten if we were not there to intervene. Likewise, we know many other experienced, reputable breeders who have had similar situations, and who have lost one or both animals to the situation. Sadly this occurrence is NOT rare at all.

"It is safe to cohabitate a male and female Western Hognose if the male is large." - MYTH

While the odds are higher in the male's favour of not being eaten, it still does not make it impossible. If the female is particularly greedy, she may still attempt to eat him and could end up choking, which means you could risk losing both animals.

"It is safe to cohabitate baby Western Hognoses together." - MYTH

In the wild, it is speculated that eating weaker siblings is how some baby Western Hognoses stay living in the original nest for longer periods before venturing out. In captivity, people have witnessed that even shortly after hatching, a larger hognose neonate has eaten a smaller sibling. People find this style of cannibalism less common in neonates than in adults.

Some breeders opt to keep clutch siblings together until they have had their first "true shed". These breeders find this keeps the clutches easier to handle for genetic and growing purposes. We have spoken with some experienced breeders who do this practice, some said they have never had an issue, while others have said cannibalism has happened on occasion.

It should be noted that there is a difference between keeping a clutch together while still knowing the risks, and buying 2 neonates and housing them together for convenience.

"It is safe to cohabitate western hognoses only during transportation." - MYTH

No!! There are a lot of factors that go into the safe shipping of live animals. The number one priority of course is the safety of the animal and putting them through the least amount of stress possible. This requires a small container so the animal will feel secure and won't be jostled around too much. Western Hognoses need to have an empty stomach to be shipped safely so there is no risk of regurgitation. This usually means no food for a minimum of 3 days up to a week. (which is perfectly fine.) Depending on temperatures, a heat pack may be added.

How does this relate to cohabitation? In this case, several factors can lead to injury or cannibalism. Vibration and heat can elicit a feeding response. The stress of being shipped may increase the chance of animals striking each other, or regurgitating from cannibalism. In short putting hungry animals in a small enclosure, where they cannot get away from one another, coupled with the above factors is a recipe for injury or death to one or more animals.

"It is safe to cohabitate western hognoses, just separate them while feeding."

- **MYTH**

Many species of snake stay in what we call "feed mode" for some time well after feeding, which varies between individuals. Many Western Hognoses are like bottomless pits, so it won't matter how full they are they may still try biting, or eating another animal that they are cohabitating with. Also, if one of the cohabitated hogs becomes stressed because of another, it can still lead to them regurgitating.

"It is safe to cohabitate female western hognoses together." - **MYTH**

While we have introduced multiple females in the same enclosure with a male during the breeding season and have witnessed the least number of issues with this, I would never say it is without risk. At the end of the day, each animal will vie for resources, such as their favourite hiding spot and heat sources. This could still lead to stress, transferal of diseases/parasites, injury/bites, or death.

"It is safe to cohabitate western hognoses only during brumation." - **MYTH**

I know many breeders who cohabitate their animals in pairs while brumating and who have had a lot of success with it. There is still a risk, and I would not tell anyone that this practice is 100% safe. We have seen some of our animals during brumation respond to having their water filled with very strong feed responses.

"It is safe to cohabitate Western Hognoses if they are in a big enough enclosure." - **MYTH**

What exactly IS "big enough" Is it a 50-gallon tank, a room, a stadium? To my knowledge, there have been no studies done on what size it would take for this species not to be stressed and/or feel the need to compete for resources. There is just a lot of speculation. However, we do know from years of experience, and after talking to other reputable breeders that you can have too large of an enclosure for this species. This can and often results in the animal becoming stressed and going off of food - especially males.



"Blossom" NFS



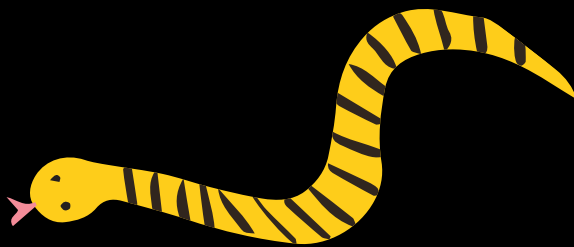
Check out "Gyoza"
A breeding ready adult male,
who is looking for a new home!

AVAILABILITY UPDATE

WWW.RADIANTREPTILESCANADA.COM > AVAILABLE WESTERN HOGNOSES

New postings We have posted some new adults. Several babies are giving us a hard time determining their sex. For these animals, we cannot currently guarantee their sex, as even with probing they are at the in-between mark.

We may be downsizing and letting go some of our adult male Western Hognoses. Be sure to keep an eye out for our newsletters and on our availabilities page.



Shipping Shipping is now available across Canada. (Weather permitting).

Holds Half of the animal's sale price is required for a non-refundable down deposit.

Payment plans We are happy to work with you to set up a payment plan.

Discounts Discounts for those purchasing multiple animals, and to repeat clients.

NEWSLETTER PROMOTION

SPRING SALE

EXTENDED

We are currently offering **\$75** off all Western Hognoses posted at \$400 and above. (Not inc. shipping& handling)

Email us at RadiantReptilesCanada@gmail.com with the code "**#Spring2022**." Just List which animals you are interested in, your shipping address and we will go from there! :)



"ID#83

This big adult male
is looking for a new home!



As always, we encourage questions and suggestions. If you have an idea for a future newsletter topic please email us at RadiantReptilesCanada@gmail.com