

Ball python essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A ball python is one of the most obedient snakes, which is why it is the most common pet snake. The ball python is native Africa residing in forests, savannahs and grasslands. Ball pythons are active around dawn and dusk. They typically grow between four and five feet in length. Ball pythons are known for curling up tightly and burrowing. Burrowing allows these snakes to follow their prey, which includes small rodents. The ball python kills its prey by constricting them. The life expectancy for the ball python in captivity is between twenty and thirty years. However, in the wild the life expectancy is around ten years old because they are eaten by their predators. During the lecture, the speaker mentioned the ball pythons parental care, defense mechanisms, and a unique adaptive quality.

Ball pythons exhibit some parental care. A female will lay between four to ten eggs which will hatch after approximately sixty days. Females usually lay her eggs underground. Female ball pythons remain with her eggs from the time they are laid until they hatch. She will not leave the eggs or eat for this three month period. After the eggs hatch parental care ends and the young are left to fend for themselves. The newborns are between nine and seventeen inches in length. Males reach sexual maturity around eighteen months. Females do not reach sexual maturity until approximately two or three years old. The main reason for such a difference in maturity age is that females need to wait until they weigh approximately three and a half pounds so they will be able to survive the incubation period.

Ball pythons have a few different defense mechanisms. They do not have venom like some snakes and they rarely bite. Instead, if a ball python is threatened it rolls itself into a ball putting its head and neck beneath the

folds of its body. In this position, the ball python can be rolled around. Ball pythons may also go into burrows if it feels threatened. For the most part ball pythons are very shy, spending most of its time hiding in small areas. Ball pythons also use camouflage in order to be less detected by their predators. Typically, ball pythons are various shades of browns and tans. Colors and patterns among the species differ depending on their specific region. Ball pythons may live alone or be in a group of snakes which are similar in size.

The ball python has a very helpful quality that it uses to hunt its prey. They are able to detect change in temperature extremely well. Ball pythons are able to detect prey if the temperature drops 3/1000ths of a degree. Along a ball pythons upper jaw are several scales which cup inward. These cups form a deep hole which contains nerves which sense infrared or body heat. Not only can a ball python sense if the temperature has changed, they can also tell which direction the heat is coming from. This adaptive quality makes it much easier to hunt for rodents.