

# Mona Boa *Epicrates monensis monensis*



**Family:** Boidae  
**Order:** Squamata

## Description

The Mona boa is a small snake that can reach a length of a little over 3 feet (1 meter). Its body is cream or light brown, with dark brown blotches on its back. The ventral area is cream colored. This species is much more slender and smaller than the Puerto Rican Boa (*Epicrates inornatus*). The scientific community is of the opinion that this snake has always been rare (uncommon).

## Biological Information

Very little is known about the biology of this species.

### Reproduction

Unlike other snake species, the Mona boa does not lay eggs. It actually gives birth to fully developed offspring.



Distribution

### Habitat

The subtropical dry forest, coastal plains, and coastal shrubbery are the species' preferred habitat. It can only be found among shrub branches or beneath rocks, structures, and vegetation that will help regulate its body's temperature.

### Diet

This is a nocturnal snake that feeds mostly on lizards, and mice.

### Distribution

This species is unique to the Mona Island Nature Reserve of Puerto Rico; that is to say, it is a species endemic to Mona.

## Threats

For conservation purposes, the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources is responsible for managing the Mona Island Nature Reserve. The species is currently threatened by exotic predators like feral cats and goats. The goats feed on the native vegetation and modify the forest composition and structure, affecting the Mona Island Boa's habitat.

## Conservation Measures

The species was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1978. Mona Island is designated as a nature reserve, under the jurisdiction of the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources. Lawful controlled huntings of the goats and pigs is a strategy used to reduce the population of these harmful species, and therefore reduce their impact on the boa. Establishing mechanisms so that visitors to Mona

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Island have the chance to enjoy the resources the island has to offer while learning about the responsibilities of protecting them is of the utmost importance. International zoos have undertaken efforts to initiate a captive breeding program for this species. The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits the killing, harassing, trapping, purchasing or selling any species, as well as parts and products derived from the species.

## References

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Rivero, J. 1978. Los anfibios y reptiles de Puerto Rico. Editorial Universitaria, San Juan, Puerto Rico. 150 pp.

## Additional Information

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