

# American corn snake

Prohibited invasive animal

Look. Report. Protect. 13 25 23



- It is illegal to import, keep, breed or sell American corn snakes in Queensland.
- They may carry new diseases.
- Colour patterns may vary, but normally vivid reddish or orange blotches with black edges.
- Predate on small mammals and reptiles.
- Early detection and reporting helps protect Queensland's natural environment.

## Description

The American corn snake (*Pantherophis guttatus*) is an attractive reptile that is primarily nocturnal and highly variable in colour. Most adults display vivid reddish or orange blotches edged in black, on a grey or orange background. The colour intensifies with age. The snake reaches its adult length of 1–1.5 m within 3–5 years. Albino or light-coloured specimens are readily available in the American and European pet trade. The colouration pattern on the snake's underside is similar to a variety of multi-coloured, ornamental corn.

In its native region, the American corn snake lives in dry fields where it hunts for small mammals (e.g. mice), reptiles and insects. The snake is harmless to humans but will strike if disturbed to scare off predators. American corn snakes are constrictors, wrapping one or two coils around their prey and squeezing until the victim suffocates.

## Biosecurity risk

The American corn snake is a prohibited invasive animal under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Prohibited species must be reported immediately to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23. You cannot keep an American corn snake as a pet in Queensland. Penalties may apply.

American corn snakes are popular pets in countries other than Australia, and are harmless to humans (although they will strike if disturbed). If released into the wild in Australia, corn snakes could prey on and out-compete native species. To prevent them from establishing in Queensland, restrictions apply to their import, possession and sale.

## What should I do?

If you think you have seen an American corn snake, report it immediately to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or scan the QR code to access our reporting web page. Until an authorised officer contacts you, please take reasonable and practical steps to prevent the American corn snake from escaping, such as shutting doors or windows to contain the animal but only if safe to do so. Do not handle if not a trained or professional snake-catcher.

## More information

Contact Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or visit [biosecurity.qld.gov.au](http://biosecurity.qld.gov.au).

