



# The Green Anaconda

As one of the world’s biggest snakes, the average Green Anaconda is about twenty feet long, though specimens up to thirty feet have been found. They can weigh as much as 550 pounds and achieve a circumference of 30 centimeters. The females grow larger than the males. The Green Anaconda is an olive green and has black or brown splotches all along its body. Its head is small, and its eyes are directly on top of its head so that it can see while swimming; the rest of its body being submerged in the water. It is found in sluggish or still waters, on river banks and grasslands in tropical areas of northern and central South America. It is not considered vulnerable to extinction, though it is threatened by habitat loss.

The Green Anaconda has a voracious appetite, and he’s not picky. If he can catch it, he will eat it, and his varied diet includes rats, fish, birds, tapirs, capybaras, deer, warthogs, caimans, other snakes and reptiles, and even crocodiles. Green Anacondas have probably eaten humans too. They kill their prey by constriction, wrapping their victims until they suffocate or drown. The anaconda can unhinge its jaw, allowing it to swallow extremely large creatures, whole, and usually head-first. Anacondas don’t move around much after they eat, and may not eat again for weeks.

Green Anacondas only breed in April and May. As many as twelve male anacondas will make up a “breeding ball” around a female. Naturalists believe that this “breeding ball” is a kind of wrestling match between the males to see who will get the female, and it can last for several weeks. Eventually the female chooses a mate, and six months later gives birth to up to 30 baby anacondas. Once born, the babies are on their own and must fend for themselves. They reach maturity at around four years.

1. What is the main idea of the passage? On a separate sheet of paper, write a brief summary of the passage.

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