

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Largest Snake in the World

By Guy Belleranti

What snake can grow longer than three NBA basketball centers lying end to end and has a body a foot thick? The green anaconda, that's what.

There are several kinds of anacondas. However, the green anaconda is the largest. The only snake longer in length is the reticulated python. However, the green anaconda is much thicker and heavier than the reticulated python. That's why the green anaconda is called the largest snake in the world.



Female green anacondas are much larger than the males, with some adults weighing 300, 400, or even over 500 pounds! That's a lot of snake.

While this powerful snake can be found on land and even climb into trees to await prey, it spends most of its time in South American tropical swamps and slow-moving streams. The green anaconda's eyes and nostrils are on the top of its head. This helps it hide in the water while watching for a tasty meal. Its olive green color with dark spots provides additional camouflage.

The green anaconda is not a venomous snake. Instead, it grabs prey with its teeth, then wraps its huge coils around the animal, constricting or squeezing until the prey stops breathing. Then, with the help of stretchy ligaments, the anaconda opens its mouth wide and swallows the prey whole. Depending upon the size of its meal an anaconda can go from many weeks to many months before it needs to eat again. What is a green anaconda's meal? They usually feast on smaller animals like fish or ducks. Occasionally they will eat larger animals like capybara, wild pigs, deer and caiman. There are even reports of green anacondas eating jaguars!

So we've talked about green anacondas as predators, but what about green anacondas as prey? Adult green anacondas are rarely hunted by other animals. However, young anacondas do have to watch out for jaguars, caiman and large raptors.

The young hatch inside the mother's body and are born live. A female green anaconda can give birth to anywhere from a dozen to one hundred young. The young are 2 to 2 ½ feet long and can swim and hunt almost immediately.

Green anacondas are not considered endangered. However, like many other wild animals, they are losing habitat to human development.

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1. Adult, female anacondas weigh...
  - a. about as much as a 6-year old human being
  - b. about as much as a full-grown lion
  - c. about as much as a full-grown elephant
  - d. about as much as a semi-truck
  
2. If reticulated pythons grow to be longer than green anacondas, why are green anacondas considered the largest snake in the world?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. How do green anacondas kill their prey?
  - a. They inject venom into the skin of their prey, which poisons and kills them.
  - b. They squirt venom into the eyes of their prey.
  - c. They wrap their bodies around prey and squeeze them to death.
  - d. They do not kill their prey. They eat their prey alive.
  
4. According to the information in the article, young anacondas are hunted  
  
by \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
  
5. How are anacondas different from most other reptiles?
  - a. Unlike most reptiles, anacondas do not have scales.
  - b. They are cold-blooded, but most reptiles are warm-blooded.
  - c. The young hatch inside the mother's body and are born live.
  - d. Almost all reptiles besides the anaconda are venomous.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the article. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



1. \_\_\_\_\_

r o s r p a t

**hint:** birds that hunt, such as a hawks and eagles

2. \_\_\_\_\_

w s s a m p

**hint:** wetland

3. \_\_\_\_\_

c t o r i c i n n s t g

**hint:** squeezing

4. \_\_\_\_\_

l d w i

**hint:** not tame; not domesticated; living in nature

5. \_\_\_\_\_

a n a c i m

**hint:** alligator-like animal

6. \_\_\_\_\_

a i m t m e e d l y

**hint:** right away; without delay

7. \_\_\_\_\_

s t r n o s i l

**hint:** holes in the body for breathing and smelling

## ANSWER KEY

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1. Adult, female anacondas weigh...
  - a. about as much as a 6-year old human being
  - b. **about as much as a full-grown lion**
  - c. about as much as a full-grown elephant
  - d. about as much as a semi-truck
  
2. If reticulated pythons grow to be longer than green anacondas, why are green anacondas considered the largest snake in the world?  
  
**Reticulated pythons are not as thick and heavy as green anacondas.**
  
3. How do green anacondas kill their prey?
  - a. They inject venom into the skin of their prey, which poisons and kills them.
  - b. They squirt venom into the eyes of their prey.
  - c. **They wrap their bodies around prey and squeeze them to death.**
  - d. They do not kill their prey. They eat their prey alive.
  
4. According to the information in the article, young anacondas are hunted  
  
by **jaguars**, **caiman**, and **large raptors**.
  
5. How are anacondas different from most other reptiles? **c**
  - a. Unlike most reptiles, anacondas do not have scales.
  - b. They are cold-blooded, but most reptiles are warm-blooded.
  - c. **The young hatch inside the mother's body and are born live.**
  - d. Almost all reptiles besides the anaconda are venomous.

## ANSWER KEY

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1. raptors                      r o s r p a t  
**hint:** birds that hunt, such as a hawks and eagles
2. swamps                      w s s a m p  
**hint:** wetland
3. constricting              c t o r i c i n n s t g  
**hint:** squeezing
4. wild                          l d w i  
**hint:** not tame; not domesticated; living in nature
5. caiman                      a n a c i m  
**hint:** alligator-like animal
6. immediately              a i m t m e e d l y  
**hint:** right away; without delay
7. nostrils                      s t r n o s i l  
**hint:** holes in the body for breathing and smelling