

Leucistic Black Rat Snake *Pantherophis obsoletus*

Most Commonly Used Name: Leucistic Black Rat

Mode of Genetic Inheritance: Recessive

Morph Type: Single Recessive Mutation

Eye Color: Black pupil & blue to silver iris

Believe it or not, Leucistic Rat Snakes ARE *from Planet Earth*. Leucism has been demonstrated in most vertebrate species of the world (not only snakes), and surely lurks in the collective genome of ALL vertebrates. The first leucistic snake mutant species to be popularized in herpetoculture was discovered in the **Texas Rat Snake**, *Pantherophis obsoletus lindheimeri*. Many snake keepers in the hobby believe that since it is virtually impossible to visually distinguish between the two cousin species, Black Rat Snake (*Pantherophis obsoletus obsoletus*) and the Texas Rat Snake (*Pantherophis obsoletus lindheimeri*) that essentially have identical scalation and body conformation - and in the absence of visible markings - Leucistic Black Rats (LBR for convenience in this discussion) may actually be Leucistic Texas Rats. I too was skeptical that the LBR version of this mutation in the hobby that co-incidentally had higher value AND was conveniently impossible to distinguish from its virtually identical Texas Rat cousin (LTR for discussion convenience). In the absence of DNA evidence, I can only tell you this. After I purchased some from a dealer - and after we both agreed that they may be a tough sell since the likelihood of the only two large North American leucistic mutants not intergrades of Black Rat x Texas Rat was obviously high - I DID notice a significant difference between the two species. I have bred and sold LTRs for years, and 98% of them would bite me nearly every time I picked them up. In the first generation of the LBRs I had - less than 50% would eagerly draw blood from me. We seldom handle our snakes, but of my LBR customers that reported back to me, only 25% of them said theirs were biters - compared to roughly 80% of my LTR customers. I've also noticed that my line of LBRs seldom grow to be as large as the average leucistic Black Rat - which is odd since the nominate race (Black Rat Snakes) is generally larger than their Texas cousins - even though there are monstrously large Texas Rats down here. My Texas Rat leucistic mutants average 6.4 feet in length, while our average Black Rat leucistic mutants average 5.5 feet in length.



What to expect:

As hatchlings, LBRs are not white. They are usually shades of pink at hatching, but quickly manifest to dirty white after their first shed (at approximately seven DAYS of post-egg age). Some demonstrate what we believe to be visible water that is retained between skin layers, but that has not been proven. If you see differently colored areas of white, randomly located on the snake, don't be overly concerned, as it is probably something that all snakes have, but can't visually demonstrate because of the colors they possess. After several months of maturity, the dirty white coloration changes to a brighter white, until at maturity, they are white like the pictured examples on this web site. Approximately 20% of all I have produced over the year will have one or two randomly located color spots on them. Not to the extent of the **Palmetto**, but the similarity of those color spots will remind you of the many different color spots seen on the Palmetto. Are Palmettos actually leucistic mutants? We may know in a few short years, but at this time, there are not enough to form a hypothesis.

Important Note:

The advertising images on our web site are representations of the average adult example of each morph. These images are not renderings of the actual animals being offered, (except for uniquely offered snakes found in the SURPLUS section of this web site). We do not provide pictures of individual hatchling snakes for sale, nor do we recommend that you ever choose a new pet based on an image of its neonatal form. Corns change so dramatically from hatchling to adult, they will NEVER have the same colors or contrasts throughout maturity. While most of the snakes we produce will mature to resemble the featured adult image(s) on our web site, unlike manufactured products that are respectively clones of each other, the nature of polygenic variation results in each animal being similar but not identical to others of its morph. The snake we select for you may not mature to be identical to the pictured examples, but will be chosen based on our experience of observing which neonates will mature to properly represent their respective morph. We take this responsibility very seriously, and therefore publish the guarantee that we will exchange your SMR snake if it does not mature to be like our advertised examples.

Glossary Term Hyperlinks:

aerobic allele amelanistic anerythrist anomaly anterior atypical axanthic Bechtel, Dr. H. Bernard brumation Carl Kauffeld carotene carotenoid Celcius chromatophore chromosome cloaca codominant colubrid compound contiguous cryptosis diurnal DNA dominant dorsal dysecdysis ecdysis ectothermic embryo embryogenic

empirical epidermis erythrism erythrophore F¹ Fahrenheit genotype gene genotype gravid guarantee hatchling
herpetoculture heritable heredity herpetology heterozygous homozygous Hume