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What do snakes eat in the rainforest

The extinction of the dinosaurs (birds notwithstanding) 65.5 million years ago didn't happen in a vacuum. When the last T. rex died, other reptilian lineages — from the winged pterosaurs to huge, aquatic relatives of today's monitor lizards — simultaneously kicked the bucket. Indeed, this was one of the greatest mass extinction events of all time. It also marked the dawn of our current geologic era: the Cenozoic, or the "Age of Mammals."But don't let the nickname fool you. Although mammals diversified like crazy in the Cenozoic, Earth wasn't done with giant reptiles yet. Scientists break the Cenozoic down into subdivisions called "epochs." And the first of these — the Paleocene — saw the rise of Titanoboa correjonensis, a colossal snake that would make modern pythons and anacondas look like spaghetti noodles.A Lost WorldCerrejón is a vast coal mine in northern Colombia. Reuters reported that it produced 37.1 million short tons (33.7 million metric tons) of the stuff in the year 2014 alone. Yet coal isn't the only precious commodity available there.Working alongside the miners, paleontologists have unearthed thousands of Cenozoic fossils in Cerrejón. Approximately 58 million years old, these fossils date back to the early Paleocene and represent exotic plants, river fish, crocodile-like predators and big old turtles with 5.7 foot (or 1.72-meter) shells — to name a few.These fossils tell us the area was tropical and swampy, much like the Amazon River Delta we have today. Wide-leaved jungle trees would've flanked ancient rivers choked with water plants. Out in the steaming wilderness, Titanoboa lurked.The Great SerpentFossils from 28 of these giant snakes have been recovered at Cerrejón. Unfortunately, we've yet to locate a complete skeleton. Instead, the scientific community has had to make do with an assortment of ribs and vertebrae — plus some skull material.Yet even these finds speak volumes. By comparing the fossils to the bones of living snakes, we can get a pretty good idea of what Titanoboa looked like. For example, subtle clues in the vertebrae indicate that the animal was a boid.It makes sense geographically: Boids are a family of snakes usually found in the Americas. Being nonvenomous, they tend to kill by constriction. Of all the boids alive today, Titanoboa's closest relative might be the red-tailed boa, a denizen of Central and South America that can grow up to 13.2 feet (or 4 meters) long. Movie buffs who've seen "A Clockwork Orange" will probably recognize said reptile.Titanoboa also invites comparisons to a much larger boid: The green anaconda. Capable of weighing 440 pounds (200 kilograms), this South American serpent is the heaviest modern snake. And it's plenty long, too: The biggest reliably measured specimen was 27.2 feet (8.3 meters) in length.Over in Asia, the unrelated reticulated python — or "retic" — can exceed this figure, stretching up to 28 feet (8.5 meters) long in some cases. But the retic has a sleeker frame; experts don't think it can rival the anaconda's maximum weight.Regardless, neither serpent could hold a candle to Titanoboa. Scientists estimate that the Paleocene predator stretched 42 to 47 feet (12.8 to 14.3 meters) in total length. Theoretically, it might've tipped the scales at 1.25 tons (1.13 metric tons). Longer than Tyrannosaurus rex, Titanoboa correjonensis is the biggest snake known to science, living or extinct.Snake Suppertime!So here's a question: What would a snake so massive eat?Green anacondas famously eat capybaras, pig-sized rodents with semiaquatic habits. Smaller cousins of the American alligator are also on their menu. To that end, a life-sized Titanoboa sculpture that the Smithsonian created went on display as part of its Titanoboa: Monster Snake exhibit. It was unveiled in New York's Grand Central Station in 2012 and showed the mighty snake wolfing down a crocodylan.The following year, a description of Titanoboa's head structure was published. Anatomically, the reptile's teeth and jaws resemble those of modern snakes who specialize in eating fish. If Titanoboa followed suit, it was the only boid on record with a fish-centric diet.Like the green anaconda, Titanoboa probably spent a great deal of time in bodies of water. There, it could easily lug its massive body weight around — and beat the jungle's sweltering heat.Scaly Thermometers?Titanoboa's discovery was first announced in a paper published in the journal Nature. The lead author was paleontologist Jason Head of the University of Cambridge. Head (who did not respond to our request for comment) cited this animal as evidence of the Paleocene's hot climate.Climate scientists think the world was far warmer in the early Paleocene than it is today. Reptiles may have reaped the benefits; for the most part, snakes, lizards, turtles and crocodiles can't generate body heat like human beings do. Instead, they maintain their vital functions by absorbing warmth from their environments.Back in '09, Head described Titanoboa as a giant thermometer. He and his colleagues used its ample size to make an educated guess about the environment it lived in.By their calculations, the very existence of such a huge, cold-blooded reptile indicates that Colombia must have had a mean annual temperature of 86 to 93 degrees Fahrenheit (30 to 34 degrees Celsius) when the snake reigned 58 million years ago.But perhaps dead boids aren't the most reliable gauges.Remember the TitansKale Sniderman is an Earth scientist at the University of Melbourne in Australia who studies prehistoric climates and ecosystems. He notes that the Pleistocene — an epoch that ended about 10,000 years ago and included Earth's most recent ice age — also had its share of big reptiles."Many now-extinct reptile species existed in the Pleistocene that were larger than their living relatives," Sniderman says via email. "Those extinct species," he adds, lived at a time when "climates pretty much everywhere were at least 1 to 3 degrees Celsius [or 1.8 to 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit] cooler than today."Consider Varanus priscus, a Komodo dragon relative that patrolled Australia during the last ice age. At roughly 18 feet (5.5 meters) long, it was far bigger than the lizards we have today. Speaking of saurians, the biggest gecko of all time died out in its native New Zealand just a few hundred years ago."Neither occurred in warm climates, by global standards," Sniderman says.It could be that giant reptiles don't need an oppressively hot planet to survive and thrive after all. Competition from mammals might be a bigger check on their success.In any case, Titanoboa is long gone. So is Varanus priscus and that great New Zealand gecko. Yet their cousins remain, enriching our world with flashy scales, forked tongues and adhesive toe pads. This may be an "Age of Mammals," but there are some wonderful reptiles still among us. When you handle deadly snakes for a living, caution is job one. When you handle snakes for God, it is not. Let's meet some folks in both worlds.By Julia Layton Image: Kristian Bell / Moment / Getty Images In a Gallup Poll conducted in the year 2000, Americans picked snakes as their number one fear. In fact, a full 51% of adults reported being afraid of these simple reptiles, more than the number who reported a fear of heights, public speaking or thunder storms. And yes, snakes like the black mamba or death adder can be pretty terrifying, but the vast majority of snakes are completely and utterly harmless. Of the 3,000 snake species on the planet, only around 7% could potentially kill or seriously injure a human, according to National Geographic. In fact, the University of Florida's Department of Wildlife estimates that people living in the U.S. are a whopping nine times more likely to be killed by lightning than to end up one of the 5 or 6 victims who die of snake bites each year.So not only are most snakes unlikely to kill you — or even harm you at all — these mostly gentle animals are actually pretty intriguing if you give them a chance. With an incredible array of colors and patterns, these creatures can be stunning, and some species even make great pets for those seeking a companion. Still not convinced that you want anything to do with snakes? Consider a move to Antarctica, Ireland, New Zealand, Iceland or Greenland, all of which are blessedly free of snakes of any kind. Before you pack your bags, take a minute to try your hand at this quiz to see how many snakes you can identify from a single image. TRIVIA See If You Can Identify All of These Venomous Snakes 7 Minute Quiz 7 Min TRIVIA Can You Identify These Venomous Snakes? 7 Minute Quiz 7 Min TRIVIA How Much Do You Think You Know About Snakes? 6 Minute Quiz 6 Min TRIVIA Can You Identify These Australian Snakes? 7 Minute Quiz 7 Min TRIVIA Can You Identify These Land Animals While They're Swimming? 6 Minute Quiz 6 Min TRIVIA Can You Identify These European Snakes? 7 Minute Quiz 7 Min TRIVIA Can You Match the Animal to the Amazing Fact? 7 Minute Quiz 7 Min TRIVIA This Venomous Snakes Identification Quiz Is Really Hard. So We'll Be Impressed if You Even Get 4 Right 7 Minute Quiz 7 Min TRIVIA Do You Know Where to Find These Venomous Snakes? 6 Minute Quiz 6 Min TRIVIA Can You Name These 40 Venomous Snakes in 5 Minutes? 7 Minute Quiz 7 Min How much do you know about dinosaurs? What is an octane rating? And how do you use a proper noun? Lucky for you, HowStuffWorks Play is here to help. Our award-winning website offers reliable, easy-to-understand explanations about how the world works. From fun quizzes that bring joy to your day, to compelling photography and fascinating lists, HowStuffWorks Play offers something for everyone. Sometimes we explain how stuff works, other times, we ask you, but we're always exploring in the name of fun! Because learning is fun, so stick with us! Playing quizzes is free! We send trivia questions and personality tests every week to your inbox. By clicking "Sign Up" you are agreeing to our privacy policy and confirming that you are 13 years old or over. Copyright © 2021 InfoSpace Holdings, LLC, a System1 Company 1 What Is a Legend on a Map? 2 How Much Money Does Each Person Get in Monopoly? 3 Protecting Workers' Rights: What Do Title VII Protections Really Mean in States with "At-Will" Emplo... 4 The World's Most Intelligent Animals 5 Financing the Future: Setting Up Savings Plans for Grandchildren The rainforest is home to some of the largest, fiercest animals and reptiles in the world, including Bengal tigers, jaguars, gorillas, anacondas, boa constrictors and reticulated pythons. Bengal tigers eat monkeys, pigs, birds, antelopes, boars, and, occasionally, elephants. Similarly, jaguars eat many different kind of animals, including turtles, tapir and deer. Gorillas, on the other hand, are vegetarians and eat leaves, fruit and bark. Reptiles make up a large class of rainforest animals. The anaconda is a large snake that lives near the water in South America. It eats rodents, fish, birds, turtles and even larger animals at times, depending on the size of the anaconda. Boa constrictors, another large snake, are known to eat birds, lizards and small rodents, such as bats. Boas do no eat larger mammals. Another kind of snake is the reticulated python, which lives all over Southeast Asia, usually near water. Reticulated pythons eat birds and mammals of varying sizes, possibly even including humans. Like other snakes, including the boa constrictor, the reticulated python uses its muscular body to constrict and suffocate its prey. Fishing is a top source of food for many people who live in the rainforest. Trout is an abundant catch that provides a low-fat source of protein. In addition, tribes hunt wild boar, deer and other animals for meat. Birds, insects and bugs are also caught for food. Acai berries, passion fruit and bananas are some of the typical fruits enjoyed by tribes in the rainforest. Other commonly found fruits are mangos, papaya, tomatoes, grapefruit, guava, figs, avocado, pineapple and coconuts. In addition, lemons and other citrus fruits grow in many regions. Rarer and less known fruits, such as aguaje, are also eaten. Nutritious nuts are gathered in the rainforest, particularly cashews, Brazilian nuts and vanilla nuts.Some of the vegetables that grow in the rainforest include potatoes, rice, corn and manioc. Eaten raw or used as a spice, many different types of peppers are also grown. Cinnamon, cloves, ginger, black pepper, cayenne pepper and other spices are also eaten by tribal people who live in the rainforest. This picture has been terrifying the Internet ever since the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department posted it to their social media pages late last week. It depicts a very healthy, very large, very intimidating centipede with a vibrant red head and lengthy fangs. Although it might appear to be some sort of foreign beast to the uninitiated, this bug is actually a Texas native. Called the Texas or giant redheaded centipede, the species has been known to grow to 8 inches in length. This particular specimen, found in Garner State Park, certainly looks to be one of the big ones. The centipede's bright colors are a warning: A piercing bite from one of its chompers is capable of delivering a painful toxin. The bite stings and causes swelling, but isn't life-threatening. Though an encounter might invade your nightmares for a while, Luckily humans aren't on the menu for this bug, but some surprising creatures are. Redheaded centipedes are known to hunt and kill lizards, toads, rodents and even snakes. Their South American cousins have been witnessed snatching bats out of the air. "They use their legs to grasp prey while feeding and their 'fangs' (actually an additional pair of highly modified legs) are capable of piercing the skin and injecting a painful toxin," explained Ben Hutchins from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at TPW Magazine. Like many other species of centipede, Texas redheads don't actually have hundreds of legs. This species typically has between 21 and 23 pairs of yellow-colored appendages. And it's a common misconception that centipedes are insects. Actually, they are of a different class of arthropod entirely: Chilopoda. They are also distinct from millipedes, creatures of yet another class entirely. Texas redheads can be rare sights on warm, sunny days, preferring to emerge from their underground lairs on cloudy days. Besides Texas, they have also been known to roam from northern Mexico to Missouri and Arkansas in the east, and to Arizona and New Mexico in the west. XIMAD is offering Snake over at the Windows Phone Marketplace with is yet another variation of the classic snake game. The game of snake has gone a long way since the days of the monochrome version that was on so many Nokia bar phones. The game premise hasn't changed a bit. You guide your snake around the screen collecting gems and artifacts while avoiding obstacles. The game has two modes, Arcade and Challenge. The Arcade Mode has you score points to work your way through multiple levels. Each level has a required number of gems to collect in order to advance to the next level. The further you advance, the more challenging the levels become. The Challenge Mode is more of a free-style game that has you competing for a high score. The more gems you collect, the longer the snake becomes. The longer your snake becomes, the more challenging maneuvers become. More after the break. You can control the snake by one of two methods. You can have Buttons Mode where virtual button appear at the bottom of the screen. You also have the Screen Mode that allows you to steer your snake by tapping on the screen in the direction you want the snake to turn. I found the Screen Mode to work the best. The buttons had a tendency to put your fingers in the way as you steer your snake around the bottom of the screen. As you collect gems, you will also find artifacts or bonus items that will turn you into a ghost with the ability to crawl through obstacles, speed up, slow down, and other bonus abilities. The graphics are nice, game play challenging and well representative of the original. Snake is a good game to pass the time and, all in all, XIMAD did a nice job of putting a new twist on the game of snake. If your a fan of the snake genre, Snake will be a nice addition to your gaming library. If you're looking for a nice game to pass the time with, Snake will fit that bill as well. The one downside to the game is that there is not a trial version available for Snake. The full version is running \$1.29 and you can find it here (opens Zune) over at the Marketplace.

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