

# FROZEN CHICKENS AS A REPLACEMENT FOOD FOR LARGE CONSTRICTORS



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It may sound strange, but feeding a defrosted deep-frozen chicken to your python or boa works just fine. I came up with this idea, when I could not (which was becoming more frequent) get hold of rabbits and guinea-pigs anywhere in my neighbourhood. This is a problem that most keepers of large constrictors have from time to time. In the past, I had fed various types of snakes with defrosted deep-frozen chicks from the pet shop and so it seemed worthwhile to try to feed a defrosted deep-frozen chicken to my large constrictor.

With this food there is one advantage for the snake, and that is there are no feathers or claws left on the chicken, something that is often a problem, as the wings are covered in feathers when the snake is swallowing the food. One disadvantage is the lack of nutritional value in a chicken without the intestines, because most of the vitamins that predators receive in nature are contained in the intestines. A simple vitamin supplement can help this shortcoming. If you intend to use this method of feeding over a long period then I strongly advise the use of the vitamin supplement. Although the chicken is supposed to be fit for human consumption, the risk from salmonella is always present in a raw chicken.

With a little bit of patience and some experimenting I succeeded to feed six out of ten snakes, by dividing the chicken up i.e. into wings, legs etc. Certain snakes have strange preferences, for these I rubbed a dead rat over the chicken to scent it, just as I did with dead rabbits, this always gave good results. I believe there are some other ways to feed a snake in captivity, for example a few years ago in England and the U.S. they had a type of sausage produced in different diameters as snake food.

The biggest advantage for me with the frozen chickens is definitely the low price. A rabbit that you buy from a pet shop as a last resort costs a lot more. The availability of frozen chickens is of course good; you can buy them in nearly every supermarket. Another good thing with this type of food is, that I sometimes get accused of causing suffering to my snakes prey. This accusation can no longer be used for the frozen chicks that are sold for cat treats and the frozen chickens, which are sold for human consumption.

*Translation: Marjon Jaskers*

*Corrections: Lawrence Smith*