

## Simandoa Cave

### Roach

*Simandoa conserfariam*



#### Physical Characteristics

- Simandoa cave roaches have long, oval-shaped bodies. Their heads and abdomens are black with the head having a distinct whiteish band around the outer edge. Under their wings, the top portion of their abdomens are black with yellow stripes, and they have bright reddish-orange legs that appear to be “spiky”.
- Nymphs start out plain black but develop yellow stripes as they grow. Adults have speckled grey wings in addition to yellow stripes on the abdomen.
- Males are typically smaller and thinner than the females, who have more rounded or plump abdomens to prepare for eggs. The females may also have slightly longer wings than the males.

#### Size

- Length: 42-47mm

#### Lifespan

- Wild: they are currently extinct in the wild
- Zoos: up to 3 years

#### Behaviors

- As a nocturnal species, these roaches emerge to hunt and scavenge for food at night. While they do have wings, this species of roach cannot fly, but they can run at a significant speed to maintain their terrestrial lifestyle.
- These roaches are avid scavengers as they will feed on decaying matter in their environment. This behavior keeps their habitat clean.
- Adults have been known to vocalized when threatened, making a high-pitched squeaking noise.
- They will gather near each other to live and can live communally, but it is unknown whether they required the presence of others of their species to survive; they are usually kept in colonies or pairs in the pet hobby.

#### Diet

- Wild: Dead insects, animals, decaying fruit, and guano.
- Zoos/Captivity: Decaying plant material, fruit, other insects.

## Reproduction

- Males must typically work on impressing a female until she is interested enough to mate as females tend to dominate pairs and colonies.
- Sources on litter size vary since they are captively kept, but females can produce up to roughly 30 young in a breeding season!
- Adults and nymphs live in relative harmony in a colony, but some antenna-nipping can occur between nymphs.



## Habitat and Range

- Habitat: One mountainous cave, in bat guano, now destroyed
- Range: The Simandou region of Guinea, West Africa
- Currently, they thrive in human care.

## Conservation

- IUCN Status: Extinct in the Wild
- Contributing factors: The only cave they inhabited was destroyed by a bauxite mining operation.
- This species has already faced loss of their entire habitat but they have been saved by breeding efforts in zoos and the pet hobby.

## Classification

- Kingdom: Animalia
- Phylum: Arthropoda
- Class: Insecta
- Order: Blattodea
- Family: Blaberidae
- Genus: *Simandoa*
- Species: *S. conserfariam*

## Interesting Facts

- Females lay eggs in an ootheca, which is an egg case that some insects, such as roaches and mantids, lay in place of individual eggs. The egg sack protects the young from their environment and maintains hydration to keep the young alive.
- Because these roaches do so well under human care, there is no current reintroduction process being formed.
- While in the wild, they dwelled in a single, dark cave, these roaches do not share any similarities with true cave-dwelling species in a group called “troglobites”.