

# MGP

## CARE SHEET : AQUATIC TURTLE (reptile)

### INCLUDES RED-EAR, MAP AND PAINTED TURTLES

Average Adult Size	5-11 inches long
Life Span	20 - 50 years with proper care, depending on species
Diet	juvenile - carnivore / adult - omnivore

Will reach adult size in 1 to 2 years, depending on species and under ideal conditions; upgrade habitat size as your turtle grows.

**Diet:** A well balanced aquatic turtle diet consists of:

- \* Pelleted commercial diet
- \* Commercial turtle treats and freeze-dried krill may be given as treats
- \* Painted wood, map and red ear - dark, leafy green veggies and finely chopped vegetables. They also benefit from comet goldfish, earthworms and insects as treats!

**Feeding:** Things to remember when feeding your aquatic turtle:

- \* Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times.
- \* Feed daily, need to be fed in water to eat.
- \* Consider a separate feeding tank as aquatic turtles are messy eaters.

**Housing:**

- \* Size - appropriately sized habitat (at least a 40 gallon breeder tank) with a screened lid so the turtle can't escape. A good rule of thumb is 10 gallons per inch of turtle; adult turtles will require more room.
- \* Habitat - aquatic turtles drink the water they swim in, so it needs to be changed frequently.
- \* Substrate - slate, rock or gravel that is too large to eat is optional; water for swimming area; some aquatic turtles require a shallow area they can rest in the water with their head sticking out and they all require a turtle dock area to bask out of the water. Create basking areas for easy entry and exit to water.
- \* Temperature - turtles are cold-blooded reptiles and external sources of warmth are essential; temperature gradient (95 degrees F for the warm end/basking area and 75 degrees F for the cool end/water); use a basking bulb and submersible heater as primary heat source.
- \* Lighting - UVB rays with full spectrum lighting for 10 to 12 hours a day is required. In candescent lighting is needed for basking area.
- \* Do not house different turtle species together.

**Normal Behavior and interaction:**

- \* Turtles will bask regularly under a heat lamp in a dry, warm area

- \* Turtles do not like frequent handling and some turtles may bite when frightened
- \* May hibernate during winter months but should not hibernate in regular household temperatures
- \* Aquatic turtles are excellent swimmers.

#### **Habitat Maintenance:**

- \* Keep the habitat clean and remove uneaten food and feces right away.
- \* Thoroughly clean and disinfect the habitat at least once a week: place turtle in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all traces of bleach smell.
- \* Add clean, dechlorinated water, with a temperature range from 70-75 degrees F before returning turtle.

#### **Grooming and Hygiene:**

- \* Aquatic turtles occasionally replace their individual scutes as they grow.
- \* Keep the habitat clean and pick up leftover food and feces right away.
- \* Because all turtles are potential carriers of infectious diseases and salmonella, always wash your hands before and after handling your turtle and/or the habitat contents to help prevent the potential of spread of diseases.
- \* Pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing and/or caring for a turtle and should consider not having a turtle as a pet.

#### **Signs of a healthy turtle :**

- \* Active and alert
- \* Eats regularly
- \* Healthy, hard shell with no lesions
- \* Clear, bright eyes with no swelling
- \* Healthy skin with no sores
- \* Clear nose and vent

#### **Red Flags:**

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian

- \* Eye, nose, or mouth discharge
- \* Discolored, bumps or spots on shell or skin
- \* Lethargy
- \* Frantic swimming
- \* Abnormal eyes
- \* Sneezing, runny nose
- \* Abnormal feces
- \* Overgrown beak
- \* Swelling behind the tympanum (external eardrum)

#### **Common Health Issues:**

- \* GI tract parasites - symptoms, poor appetite, listlessness, possibly diarrhea and anal prolapse.
- \* Respiratory Infection - symptoms, open-mouth breathing, eye, nose and/or mouth discharge; sneezing. Can be caused by a cold habitat. Ensure habitat is appropriately warm.
- \* Shell Rot/Ulcers - symptoms, discolored or foul-smelling patches or pits on the shell that can become infected. May be caused by an unclean habitat or improper diet.
- \* Eye or respiratory infection - symptoms, swollen eyes. May be caused by a Vitamin A deficiency.

**DO NOT USE SPRAYS OF ANY KIND AROUND TURTLE TANK INCLUDING INSECTICIDES OR AIR FRESHENERS.**