

Aquatic Turtles

Aquatic turtles are among the most popular reptiles kept as pets. There are many aquatic turtle species that make great pets when cared for properly. Although there are many different types of aquatic turtles in North America, the maintenance and care requirements in captivity are all very similar. It is important to remember that turtles are long lived animals and many will live more than 20 years. Keeping a turtle is a long-term commitment and needs to be considered before purchasing. Please do not release pet turtles into the wild.

- **Common Name:** Aquatic Turtles
- **Scientific Name:** *Graptemys spp.*, *Trachemys spp.*, *Pseudemys spp.*+
- **Distribution:** Southeast and Central U.S.A.
- **Size:** 5-12"
- **Life Span:** 6-35+ years

Habitat

- Hatchling & juveniles will need a minimum of a 20 gallon aquarium.
- Depending on species, adults will need a minimum of a 40 gallon aquarium per pair of turtles.
- Rule Of Thumb: For every one inch of turtle = you'll need approximately 10 gallons of water.
- Provide hiding places and basking areas.
- Provide filtration with Canister Filters

Heating

- Daytime Terrarium Air Temperature: 75-80° F.
- Basking Spot: 85-90° F
- Water Temperature: 78-80°F.
- A quality aquarium heater will be needed to maintain water temperatures between 78-80°F.

- Position basking areas in places where turtles can exit the water, such as on land.

Lighting

- UVB Lighting is essential for aquatic turtles to process calcium in captivity. Lighting should be provided for 8-10 hours per day.
- Without UVB lighting turtles will develop serious health problems such as Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD).
- A 5.0 UVB fluorescent lamp is a great choice for providing UVB.
- A basking bulb is a great choice to provide basking heat, however care must be taken to keep the lamp away from water.
- We recommend using a lamp stand to safely mount your heating and lighting devices over your enclosure.

Substrates

- We do not recommend using substrates such as sand or gravel for aquatic turtles. These substrates can be accidentally ingested and may cause impaction.
- Land Area: Coconut fiber, orchid bark, or cypress mulch are good choices for land areas.
- Sand mixed with coconut fiber is a great egg laying medium for turtles.

Nutrition

- Most aquatic turtles are omnivores that change their diet throughout their lives.
- Aquatic turtle food has been formulated to offer balanced nutrition throughout the changing life stages of your turtle.
- Gourmet Aquatic Turtle Food is a great choice to offer your turtles as a treat or main diet.
- Zoo Med has an entire line of Can O' Insects that will help you supplement the diet and offer a variety of insects to your turtle.
- Providing a cuttlebone will help maintain proper calcium levels and help maintain the turtle's beak.