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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

South African Bowsprit Tortoise

Chersina angulata

Chersina angulata is a medium-sized, domed tortoise from the coastal and scrub regions of South Africa. It is recognised by the large, projecting shield under the chin (the gular scute), which males use to overturn rivals. The shell length is typically 17-19 cm. It is hardy in its own Mediterranean-type climate, but copes poorly with cold and damp and needs plenty of space, sun and dry, sandy ground.

Family: Testudinidae Former name: *Testudo angulata; Testudo bellii; Goniochersus angulatus; Neotestudo angulata; Chersine angulata*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15-35 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**30-50 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**160 × 80 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-28 °C**
Basking spot	**32-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**12-18 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and plants**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**120-144 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-6**
Incubation	**94-198 days** at 28-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little published knowledge exists on the care of *Chersina angulata* outside South Africa.
TEMPERATURE	By day the enclosure should be 22-28 °C, with a basking spot of 32-35 °C under a lamp, measured on the substrate. The figures are estimated from the climate of the habitat and borrowed from *T. hermanni*.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	*C. angulata* belongs to dry to semi-dry habitats and needs a humidity of 40-60 %; the figure is an estimate based on the habitat. Keep most of the substrate dry and make a slightly damper corner under a shelter.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*C. angulata* is diurnal and basks a great deal. Sunlight is best, and the animal should be outside in the sun whenever the weather allows.
FEEDING	In the wild herbs and grasses are the most important food, and the animal also eats moss, fungi, insects, snail shells and droppings. It feeds selectively and changes its food with the season.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is shy and withdraws under bushes or half-buries itself.
NATIVE RANGE	South Africa and Namibia.