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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Chinese Three-striped Box Turtle

Cuora trifasciata

Cuora trifasciata is a medium-sized turtle from southern China with a hinged plastron, a brown carapace with three black lengthwise stripes and a yellow upper jaw. The shell grows to 25 cm. The species is semi-aquatic and needs a large aqua-terrarium with a basking spot, UVB and a land area. It is critically endangered in the wild, and captive-bred animals are the only right choice.

Family: Geoemydidae Former name: *Sternothaerus trifasciatus; Cistudo trifasciata; Cyclemys trifasciata; Pyxiclemmys trifasciata*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15-25 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**25-50 years**
Active	**By day and at dusk**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**130 × 65 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 20-30 cm
Water temperature	**24-28 °C**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects, complete diet, plants, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**3-4 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**85-90 days** at 26-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Critically Endangered (CR)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about keeping *Cuora trifasciata*, because the species is almost only kept in captive breeding and conservation projects.
TEMPERATURE	The air temperature should be 24-28 °C by day, and the basking spot should be 30-32 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer on the shell. At night the temperature can drop to 20-24 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 60-80%, and the land area should be damp but not wet. *Cuora trifasciata* comes from a humid climate, and hatchlings dry out quickly.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water should be 24-28 °C and about twice as deep as the shell is wide: 20-30 cm for adults.
LIGHTING AND UVB	UVB light is necessary for an animal kept indoors. Zone 2 is borrowed from the close relatives and suits a species that basks beside fresh water; the requirement has not been measured for the species.
FEEDING	*Cuora trifasciata* is omnivorous but eats mostly animal food.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Cuora trifasciata* is shy and cautious. The animal withdraws and closes its shell when frightened, and seeks cover again. It is most active by day and at dusk. It is not an animal for handling.
NATIVE RANGE	China and Hong Kong SAR China.