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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Common Map Turtle

Graptemys geographica

Graptemys geographica is a diurnal, very shy aquatic turtle from large rivers and lakes in north-eastern North America. The shell carries a network of yellow lines like the contours on a map. The female reaches up to 27 cm and is far larger than the male. The species needs a large, clean, well-oxygenated aquatic enclosure with a basking area and UVB, tolerates poor water quality badly and suits experienced keepers best.

Family: Emydidae Former name: *Testudo geographica; Emys geographica; Malaclemys geographica*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**10-27 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**150-2,500 g**
Lifespan	**30-35 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**150 × 75 × 70 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 30-40 cm
Water temperature	**22-26 °C**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**4-6 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects, complete diet, plants, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**120-168 months**
Clutch size	**6-20 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Incubation	**50-70 days** at 26-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix III**
EU annex	**Annex C**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Only limited knowledge exists about the care of *Graptemys geographica*, because the species is rare in captivity and difficult to keep.
TEMPERATURE	The surface of the basking spot should be 35-40 °C, measured with an IR thermometer a couple of hours after the lamps are switched on.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Air humidity matters little for an aquatic turtle; 50-80% in the room is suitable.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water is the animal's living space, so it must be deep, clean, well-oxygenated and moving. The water depth is 30-40 cm for adult animals, and the temperature is 22-26 °C (see Temperature).
LIGHTING AND UVB	UVB is a necessity: the species is diurnal and basks for many hours a day, and zone 3 is suitable.
FEEDING	*Graptemys geographica* is omnivorous but takes mostly animal food, and it eats only in the water.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Graptemys geographica* is very shy and dives at the slightest disturbance, so the tub must stand in a quiet place, with no traffic past it, and with opaque sides or a background.
NATIVE RANGE	Canada and United States.