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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

False Map Turtle

Graptemys pseudogeographica

Graptemys pseudogeographica is a diurnal, strongly aquatic turtle from the large rivers of the Mississippi drainage in the USA. The female reaches up to about 27 cm and the male 15 cm, and the species requires a large, flowing and very clean water tank with a basking spot and strong UVB. It is shy, easily stressed and best suited to experienced keepers.

Family: Emydidae Former name: *Graptemys kohnii*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**9-27 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**1,100-1,800 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	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 30-40 cm
Water temperature	**22-28 °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	**48-168 months**
Clutch size	**8-22 eggs**
Clutches per year	**2-3**
Incubation	**52-85 days** at 25-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Keep the animal in an aquarium, a large tank or a closed outdoor pond, not in an ordinary terrarium.
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, and the air above it about 30 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	For a turtle, humidity is the water, so the relative humidity of the air is not decisive; 50-80 % in the room is plenty.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water is the animal's living space, so it must be deep, clean, oxygen-rich and warm. The water depth is 30-40 cm for adults, and the temperature is 22-28 °C (see Temperature).
LIGHTING AND UVB	UVB is a necessity: the species is diurnal and basks for many hours a day. Ferguson zone 3 is borrowed from *Trachemys scripta*.
FEEDING	*G. pseudogeographica* is omnivorous and eats only in the water.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*G. pseudogeographica* is shy and sensitive and dives at the slightest disturbance. It is not an animal to be handled: it is easily stressed and may bite when it feels threatened. Feeding with tweezers is the gentlest contact.
NATIVE RANGE	United States.