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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Forsten's Tortoise

Indotestudo forstenii

Indotestudo forstenii is a medium-sized tortoise from the forests of Sulawesi and Halmahera in Indonesia. The carapace is caramel to dark brown with black blotches, and adults typically reach about 25 cm. The species is crepuscular and shy, needs warmth and high humidity, and does not hibernate. It is critically endangered, and animals taken from the wild are often sick.

Family: Testudinidae Former name: *Testudo forstenii; Geochelone forsteni; Indotestudo elongata forsteni*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**25-30 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**2,000-3,000 g**
Lifespan	**30-50 years**
Active	**At dusk**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**180 × 120 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**26-30 °C**
Basking spot	**30-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-20 °C**
Humidity	**70-85%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Fruit, plants and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1-4 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**130-165 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 the care of *Indotestudo forstenii*, and much is borrowed from the close relative *Indotestudo elongata*. The species needs a large, open floor area with damp substrate and hides.
TEMPERATURE	The air should be 26-30 °C by day and 18-20 °C at night. The animals do not seek the sun and seldom sit under the lamp, but a warm zone of 30-32 °C under a heat lamp at one end, measured at shell height, gives them a choice.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be high, about 70-85 %, with a damper and a drier zone so that the animal can choose. The substrate should be damp but not wet, and the hides are dampened regularly.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Indotestudo forstenii* avoids bright light, but needs vitamin D3 for calcium metabolism. The best solution is time outdoors in partial shade; glass and acrylic block UVB.
FEEDING	*Indotestudo forstenii* is omnivorous, with plants as the main component. The basis is leaves and herbs such as romaine lettuce, endive, dandelion and plantain together with grated vegetables.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Indotestudo forstenii* is shy and most active at dawn and dusk. It needs several hides and must not be disturbed all the time. Lift it only when necessary, under the plastron with both hands.
NATIVE RANGE	Indonesia.