herpy

TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Speke's Hinge-back Tortoise

Kinixys spekii

Kinixys spekii is a medium-sized, elongated tortoise from the savannas and open woodland of eastern and southern Africa. The shell is flat and usually 13-18 cm long, and a movable hinge at the rear lets adults close their hind legs inside. The species is a true omnivore with fungi as its favourite food; it stresses easily, and newly imported animals often carry many intestinal parasites, so it is not a tortoise for beginners.

Family: Testudinidae Former name: *Cinixys spekii; Homopus darlingi; Kinixys australis; Kinixys jordani; Kinixys youngi*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**13-21 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**500-1,500 g**
Lifespan	**30-50 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Savanna, dry forest and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**160 × 80 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-30 °C**
Basking spot	**32-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects, plants and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**84-108 months**
Clutch size	**2-6 eggs**
Incubation	**220-365 days** at 29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Not Evaluated (NE)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Little specific information exists on the care of *Kinixys spekii*, because the species was long treated as part of *Kinixys belliana* and is kept far less often than several of its relatives.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the enclosure should be 26-30 °C, with a basking spot of 32-35 °C under a lamp at one end, measured on the substrate. The basking spot temperature is borrowed from related tortoises.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

As a savanna species, *K. spekii* needs less humidity than the forest species of the genus, but it likes moisture and does not thrive in dry air.

LIGHTING AND UVB

K. spekii is diurnal, and its activity depends on the heat: on hot days the animal is out in the morning and evening and hides in the middle of the day, while on cool days it is out around midday. Natural sunlight is best.

FEEDING

K. spekii is a true omnivore.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is shy and withdraws into its shell or digs in when disturbed. If picked up, it hisses, often empties its bowels and may snap at the air.

NATIVE RANGE

Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Congo - Kinshasa, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Eswatini, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.