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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Eastern Mud Turtle

Kinosternon subrubrum

Kinosternon subrubrum is a small, dark mud turtle from the south-eastern USA. The shell reaches 8-12 cm, and the species walks mostly along the bottom of shallow, planted water. It has two movable hinges on the plastron, so it can close itself in almost completely, and it can live 20-50 years. The species is shy and most active at dusk and needs a filtered tub with shallow water, a heat lamp and UVB.

Family: Kinosternidae Former name: *Kinosternon pensylvanicum*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**8-12 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**90-260 g**
Lifespan	**20-50 years**
Active	**At dusk**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**80 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-29 °C**
Basking spot	**30-33 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 15-20 cm
Water temperature	**21-24 °C**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects, complete diet, plants, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-96 months**
Clutch size	**2-5 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**75-125 days** at 26-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	*Kinosternon subrubrum* is kept in an aquarium or a shallow tub with a land area, not in an ordinary terrarium.
TEMPERATURE	The water should be 21-24 °C, and a water heater with a guard is normally necessary. The basking spot should be 30-33 °C measured on the surface, and the air in the tub 24-29 °C by day.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Air humidity matters little for an aquatic turtle; 40-60% in the room is suitable. The air above the tub must not be cold or draughty, because that increases the risk of respiratory infections. The water must be clear and clean.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water is 15-20 cm deep for adult animals, with flat and shallower areas where the animal can rest and stretch its neck up to the surface. The species is a weak swimmer, so deep water causes stress.
LIGHTING AND UVB	UVB is recommended, so the animal can make vitamin D3 and absorb calcium, and the basking spot should have both a heat lamp and a UVB tube, even though the species only seldom basks.
FEEDING	*Kinosternon subrubrum* is omnivorous but mostly carnivorous. In the wild it eats snails, mussels, worms, insects, spiders, crustaceans, tadpoles, carrion, algae, aquatic plants and seeds.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Kinosternon subrubrum* is shy and active, especially at dusk, and is seen mostly when it investigates the bottom. It is not an animal to pick up: it can bite hard with its horny beak and release a foul-smelling fluid.
NATIVE RANGE	United States.