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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Spanish Terrapin

Mauremys leprosa

Mauremys leprosa is a diurnal, semi-aquatic turtle from the Iberian Peninsula, southern France and north-western Africa. The shell is typically 12-18 cm long, and young animals often have clear yellow and red markings. The species tolerates many kinds of water and needs a large, filtered aquarium or a secure outdoor pond with a basking area and UVB.

Family: Geoemydidae Former name: *Emys leprosa; Clemmys leprosa*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**12-21 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-20 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 30-35 cm
Water temperature	**20-26 °C**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, complete diet, plants, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**3-16 eggs**
Incubation	**65-75 days** at 27-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Not Evaluated (NE)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Keep the animal in an aquarium, a large tub or a closed outdoor pond, not in an ordinary terrarium.
TEMPERATURE	The surface of the basking spot must be 30-35 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer a couple of hours after the lamps are switched on, and the room air 22-28 °C by day.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	For a turtle the humidity is the water itself, so the humidity of the air is not decisive; 50-80 % in the room is suitable. What is decisive is the cleanliness of the water and a land section where the animal can dry completely.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water is the animal's living space, so it must be deep and clean. The water must be at least twice as deep as the shell is wide, and 30-35 cm suits adults. The temperature is 20-26 °C (see Temperature).
LIGHTING AND UVB	UVB is essential. Use a T5 HO tube with a reflector over the basking spot, so the animal gets UVB when it dries off. The species belongs to Ferguson zone 3, and the UV index at the basking spot must be 3.0-4.0.
FEEDING	In the wild, *M. leprosa* eats a mixture of plants and animals: filamentous algae, aquatic plants, insect larvae, earthworms, snails, tadpoles and small amphibians, and it readily takes carrion.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*M. leprosa* is diurnal and shy in the wild: it dives at the slightest disturbance, but curiosity often makes it poke its head up after a moment. Most animals do not like being touched.
NATIVE RANGE	Spain, Portugal, France, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania and Western Sahara.