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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

## River Cooter

# *Pseudemys concinna*

*Pseudemys concinna* is a large, diurnal freshwater turtle from rivers and lakes in the eastern and central USA, with a flat shell decorated with yellow whorls. The shell can exceed 40 cm, and the animal can live for several decades. An adult needs a very large, filtered tank holding several hundred litres of water, a warm basking spot, strong UVB and a mainly plant-based diet.

Family: Emydidae

KEY FACTS

### THE ANIMAL

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| Adult size | **22-44 cm**<br>total length incl. tail |
| Lifespan | **20-44 years** |
| Active | **By day** |
| Lifestyle | **Semi-aquatic** |
| Habitat | **Wetland** |
| Difficulty | **Experienced** |

### CARE

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|---|---|
| Min. enclosure | **220 × 110 × 70 cm**<br>L × W × H for 1 adult |
| Temperature, day | **21-31 °C** |
| Basking spot | **30-40 °C** |
| Temperature, night | **20-24 °C** |
| Humidity | **50-80%** |
| Water | **Aquaterrarium**<br>depth 30-45 cm |
| Water temperature | **21-31 °C** |
| UVB | **Essential**<br>Ferguson zone 3 |
| Diet | **Insects, complete diet, plants and worms/snails** |
| Kept | **Singly** |

### BREEDING

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| Reproduction | **Egg-laying** |
| Clutch size | **10-20 eggs** |
| Clutches per year | **1-6** |
| Incubation | **80-150 days**<br>at 26-30 °C |

### PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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| CITES | **Not listed** |
| EU annex | **Not listed** |
| IUCN | **Least Concern (LC)** |

## Care at a glance

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|---|---|
| THE ENCLOSURE | Keep the animal in a large aquarium, a tub or an enclosed indoor pond, not in an ordinary terrarium. |
| TEMPERATURE | The surface of the basking spot should be about 40 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer a couple of hours after the lamps are switched on, and the air above it 30-32 °C. |
| HUMIDITY AND WATER | The turtle's moisture is the water itself, so the humidity of the air is not decisive; 50-80 % in the room is suitable. What matters is the cleanliness of the water. |
| WATER AND WATER QUALITY | The water is the animal's living space, so it must be deep, clean and warm. The water must be at least twice as deep as the shell is wide, and 30-45 cm suits adults. The temperature is 21-31 °C for adults (see Temperature). |
| LIGHTING AND UVB | UVB is a necessity. The species is diurnal, basks a great deal and belongs to Ferguson zone 3. The UV index at the surface of the basking spot must be 3.0-4.0 and lower elsewhere in the setup, so the animal can choose. |
| FEEDING | In the wild *P. concinna* eats mostly aquatic plants, grass and algae and also takes plants at the water's edge and fallen fruit; it has tooth-like points in the upper jaw that help it tear through fibrous leaves. |
| BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING | *P. concinna* is diurnal and very shy: at the slightest movement or sound it slips from the basking spot into the water. It does not like being handled and should be lifted only when necessary. |
| NATIVE RANGE | United States. |