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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Pond Slider

Trachemys scripta

Trachemys scripta is a diurnal, semi-aquatic turtle from the south-eastern and central USA and north-eastern Mexico. The shell grows to about 30 cm, and the animal can live for more than 40 years. An adult needs a large, filtered tank holding about 330 litres of water, a land area with a warm basking spot and powerful UVB.

Family: Emydidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**18-30 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**20-40 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**150 × 75 × 70 cm** 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** depth 30-40 cm
Water temperature	**21-31 °C**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, complete diet, plants, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**2-30 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-5**
Incubation	**59-112 days** at 22-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Keep the animal in an aquarium, a large tub or a closed 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	A turtle's humidity is the water itself, so the relative humidity of the air is not decisive and is not well documented for the species; 50-80 % in the room is plenty. 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 30-40 cm suits adults. The temperature is 21-31 °C for adults (see Temperature).
LIGHTING AND UVB	UVB is essential. The species belongs to Ferguson zone 3, and the UV index at the surface of the basking spot should be 3.0-4.0 and lower elsewhere in the set-up, so the animal can choose.
FEEDING	*T. scripta* is omnivorous and in the wild eats small animals, crustaceans, snails, worms, small fish, tadpoles and other animals, but also large amounts of algae and aquatic plants; adults are almost herbivorous.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*T. scripta* is diurnal and curious and quickly learns to associate you with food. Most animals do not like being touched and stroked.
NATIVE RANGE	United States and Mexico.