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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Yellow-Footed Tortoise

Chelonoidis denticulatus

Chelonoidis denticulatus is a large, dark forest tortoise from the Amazon and the adjoining forests with yellow to orange scales on the head and legs. The shell is typically 35-45 cm long, and in some populations the animals reach 60-70 cm. The species can live for more than 50 years, requires even warmth and high humidity all year and eats leaves, fruit and a little animal food.

Family: Testudinidae Former name: *Chelonoidis denticulata; Geochelone denticulata; Testudo denticulata; Testudo tabulata* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**35-70 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**50-60 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Dry forest and rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**320 × 160 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-29 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-23 °C**
Humidity	**70-90%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects, fruit, plants and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**96-120 months**
Clutch size	**2-7 eggs**
Incubation	**120-190 days** at 29-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Chelonoidis denticulatus is kept broadly like its close relative *Chelonoidis carbonarius*, but is a more distinctly forest species that requires more shade, more stable warmth and an evenly high humidity.

TEMPERATURE

The air temperature is 26-29 °C by day, and the basking spot under the heat lamp is 29-32 °C, measured on the surface itself. The cooler end is 24-26 °C. At night the temperature may fall to 20-23 °C, but never below 18 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity has not been measured for the species; 70-90 % is borrowed from *C. carbonarius* and suits a humid forest species. The substrate must be evenly moist without standing in water.

LIGHTING AND UVB

C. denticulatus is diurnal, but a shade-loving forest species that does not bask in bright light like desert species. UVB is necessary all the same: measure a UV index of 2.0-3.0 at the basking spot (Ferguson zone 2).

FEEDING

C. denticulatus is an omnivore. In the wild it eats leaves, grass, flowers, fallen fruit, fungi, carrion and slow small animals. Fruit makes up slightly more of the diet than in *C. carbonarius*, but the staple is still leaves.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is calm and inquisitive, but often a little more reserved than *C. carbonarius*, and it prefers to stay close to cover. Many animals do become trusting and come forward when there is food.

NATIVE RANGE

Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Trinidad & Tobago.