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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

False Map Turtle

Graptemys pseudogeographica

Graptemys pseudogeographica is a diurnal, strongly aquatic turtle from the large rivers of the Mississippi drainage in the USA. The female reaches up to about 27 cm and the male 15 cm, and the species requires a large, flowing and very clean water tank with a basking spot and strong UVB. It is shy, easily stressed and best suited to experienced keepers.

Family: Emydidae Former name: *Graptemys kohnii* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**9-27 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**1,100-1,800 g**
Lifespan	**30-35 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**180 × 70 × 70 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 30-40 cm
Water temperature	**22-28 °C**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**4-6 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects, complete diet, plants, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**48-168 months**
Clutch size	**8-22 eggs**
Clutches per year	**2-3**
Incubation	**52-85 days** at 25-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix III**
EU annex	**Annex C**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
Keep the animal in an aquarium, a large tank or a closed outdoor pond, not in an ordinary terrarium. The volume of water determines the size: there must be at least about 15 litres of water per cm of shell length.

TEMPERATURE
The surface of the basking spot should be 35-40 °C, measured with an IR thermometer a couple of hours after the lamps have been switched on, and the air above it about 30 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
The turtle's humidity is the water, so the relative humidity of the air is not decisive and is not documented in detail for the species; 50-80 % in the room is ample.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY
The water is the animal's living space, so it must be deep, clean, oxygen-rich and warm. Water depth is 30-40 cm for adult animals, and the temperature is 22-26 °C (see Temperature).

LIGHTING AND UVB
UVB is a necessity: the species is diurnal and basks for many hours a day. Ferguson zone 3 is borrowed from *Trachemys scripta*.

FEEDING
G. pseudogeographica is omnivorous and eats only in the water.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
G. pseudogeographica is shy and sensitive and dives at the slightest disturbance. It is not an animal to be handled: it is easily stressed and may bite when it feels threatened. Feeding with tweezers is the gentlest contact.

NATIVE RANGE
United States.