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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Balkan Terrapin

Mauremys rivulata

Mauremys rivulata is a medium-sized, diurnal freshwater turtle from the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean region. Females reach a shell length of about 24 cm, males about 19 cm. The species is hardy and tolerates many kinds of water, but needs a large, filtered aquatic set-up with a warm basking spot and UVB. In summer it can be kept outdoors in a secure pond.

Family: Geoemydidae Former name: *Mauremys caspica rivulata; Emys rivulata* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15-24 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**170 × 70 × 65 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-29 °C**
Basking spot	**30-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 25-40 cm
Water temperature	**21-27 °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	**4-10 eggs**
Clutches per year	**2-3**
Incubation	**49-77 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 a large aquatic set-up, a tub or a secure pond, not in an ordinary terrarium.
TEMPERATURE	The water should be 21-27 °C. The air above the water should be 24-29 °C, and the surface of the basking spot should reach 30-35 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The turtle's humidity is the water itself. The relative humidity of the air is not documented for the species, and 50-70 % in the room is an estimate.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water is the animal's living space, so it must be deep, clean and warm. The water depth must at least equal the shell length, and 25-40 cm suits adults; juveniles need lower water. The temperature is 21-27 °C (see Temperature).
LIGHTING AND UVB	UVB is a necessity: it enables the animal to produce vitamin D3, absorb calcium and develop a healthy shell.
FEEDING	*Mauremys rivulata* is omnivorous. In the wild, young animals are predominantly carnivorous, while adults eat more plants.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Mauremys rivulata* is diurnal and shy: it dives lightning fast when disturbed. The genus is intelligent and learns to associate you with food. The animal does not like being handled.
NATIVE RANGE	Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Syria and Turkey.