



**P & K Pets
Info Sheet #01**

19 Magill Rd

Stepney

SA 5069

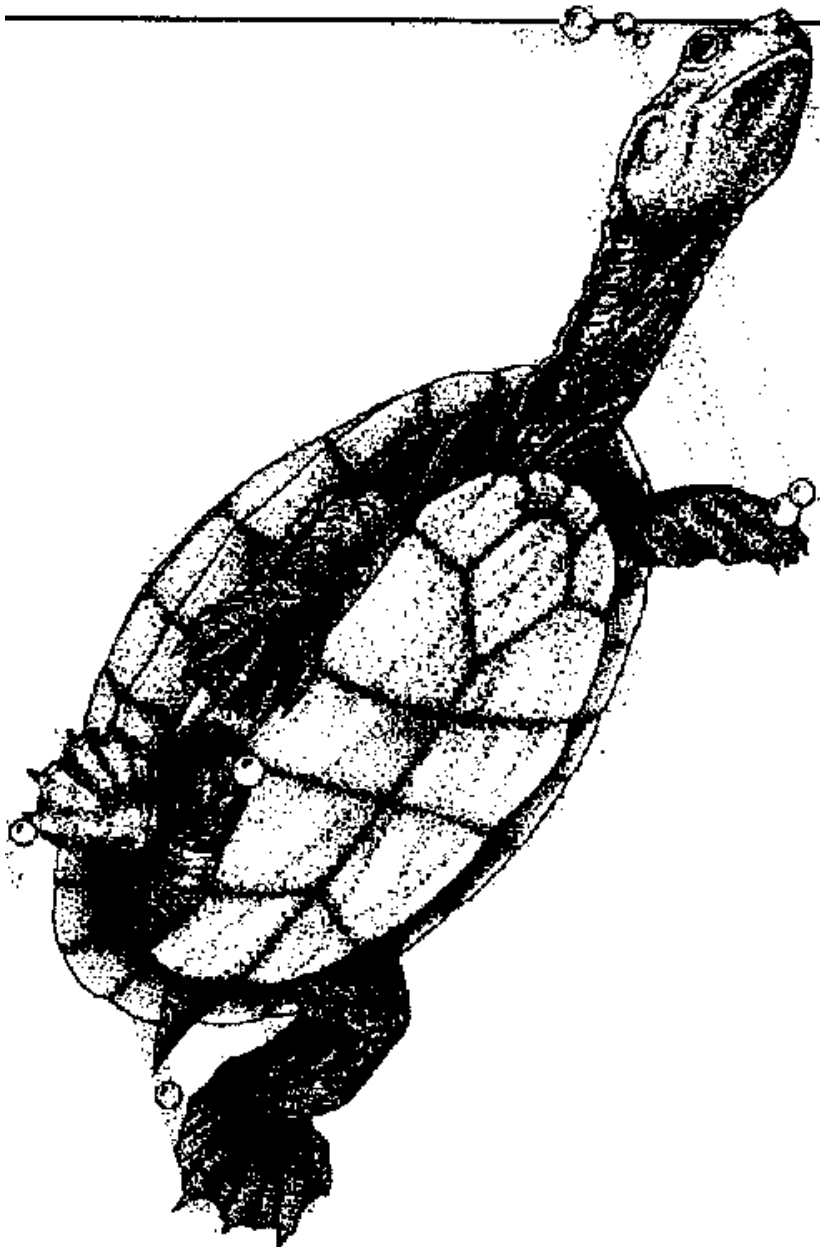
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TURTLE CARE



INFORMATION



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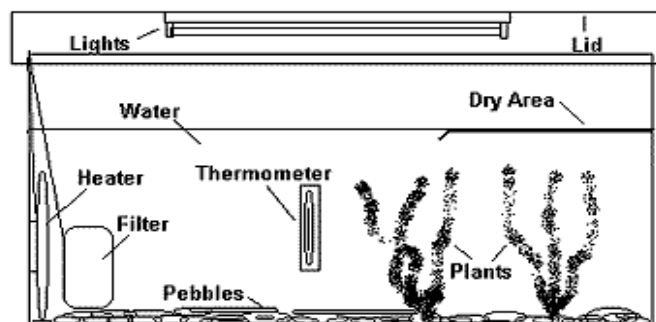
A turtle neutralizer block will help to maintain the PH level as it will dissolve when water is becoming acidic.

Aquarium gravel is recommended to be placed on the bottom of your aquarium to help maintain a good balance of nitrifying bacteria. When doing water changes, use a gravel cleaner as this is very easy to use and will siphon the water from the aquarium and clean your gravel at the same time.

A complete water treatment and conditioner is required when using tap water as it will remove all traces of harmful chemicals and toxins.

An ultraviolet light must be provided for proper shell formation. Your light should be turned on for 12 hours during the day. Turtles would naturally get vitamin D from sunlight in the wild and unless you are going to let your turtle out every day for a walk in the sun a UV light will be necessary. If your light is a tube i.e. repti-sun 5.0, it must be renewed every 6 to 9 months even though they show visible signs that they are on, they do lose their UV rays and do have a limited life.

Live or plastic plants can be used to decorate your aquarium. Turtles will sometimes eat live plants but they are good to help maintain a varied diet.



LAYOUT FOR YOUR BASIC TURTLE AQUARIUM



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FEEDING

Your turtle needs to be fed in water, as they do not eat out of water. It is recommended that your turtle should be fed out of its home aquarium. The reason we feel you should do this is to minimise rotting of left over food in the aquarium and to monitor your turtle's feeding habits. With the water from your turtle's tank, place it in your turtle's own feeding container, e.g. like an ice cream container, Making sure the turtle can still come up for air. It is very important that you don't make the water too deep, just enough to cover your turtle so he can feed. Leave your turtle in its feeding container for about 10 minutes and when your turtle has finished feeding, put it back into it's aquarium. Throw away the water and waste that is left in the feeding container and rinse it out thoroughly.

WHAT DO I FEED MY TURTLE?

The types of food that you should feed your turtle should be varied as much as possible and no one food should be constantly given. Variation is the key, so feed your turtle once a day for the first six months and then 3 times a week after that. Never feed (in volume) anymore than the size of the turtles head and neck.

THE FOLLOWING IS A GOOD FOOD GUIDE:

- Frozen turtle dinners
- Frozen brine shrimp
- Floating turtle pellets
- Live black worms
- Live meal worms (only to be fed in small amounts)
- Beef heart / beef heart and liver, frozen
- Dried white shrimp
- Beef liver (only once a month for vitamin A)
- Live insects such as crickets, moths, flies, mosquito larva etc
- Chopped lean kangaroo meat or extremely lean beef (not minced)
- Live whole fish e.g. guppies
- Peeled fresh prawns
- Live earthworms
- Live yabbies



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Most of these foods are available from our store at P&K Pets. Live food such as flies, moths etc must not have been in contact with any insecticides. A reptile calcium and vitamin supplement should be used with the above foods. We recommend Wombaroo reptile supplement, which should be rolled or dusted on certain food items before feeding to your turtle.

HEALTH

It is quite normal for your turtle to shed its skin and shell. The turtle's shell will lift and flake off leaving a new shell underneath, while the skin will shed leaving new skin underneath. It is very important to give your turtle tank regular water changes. We recommend to do a part water change every few days. Use your gravel cleaner to do this. Test the PH level once a week and adjust if necessary. Clean your filtration as required. The reason why most turtles get sick is normally due to poor water quality, even though your water may look clean and you have a filter in your tank, it doesn't mean that it is.

COMMON DISEASES

FUNGUS: Fungus first appears on a turtle as white spots or small whitish areas on the feet and neck. It can be caused by a number of / or a combination of factors:

- Stress, due to change of environment
- Water temperature too low
- A lack of basking areas to dry the turtles skin out
- Lack of sunlight and beneficial UV rays
- Poor water quality



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You must recognize the incidence of fungus on a turtle as quickly as possible so that it does not spread into the internal cavity of the turtle. To treat your turtle, move your turtle into a separate container with no water, and allow the turtle to dry out. Apply **BETADINE** lotion on to the affected parts. Leave the turtle out of the water for no more than 2.5 hours and then return to the water. Repeat as necessary until symptoms disappear. Twice a day is sufficient. **FUNGUS ADE** or **MYAZIN** should also be added to your aquarium water as directed on the bottle. Make sure you don't add the medication into a tank containing biological filtration because it will kill off a majority of your nitrifying bacteria living in the filter. Also remove any activated carbon from your filter when treating the aquarium.

SOFT SHELL: This can occur due to a lack of calcium in a turtle's diet. It can also be caused by not enough ultra-violet light (namely UVB) which enables the turtle to synthesise calcium in its body. In some cases it can be reversed, but will require plenty of calcium, sunlight and the right amount of care. Feeding the same types of food everyday, e.g. live black worms, may bring about soft-shell due to lack of calcium. So remember vary the diet as much as possible.

EYE PROBLEMS: A condition called Swollen Eye can occur in certain turtles. It is generally caused by lack of vitamin A in the diet or by bad water conditions. Swollen Eye can be treated by applying general antibiotic eye creams such as Neo-Mycin and by administering vitamin A. Vitamin A can be injected but a veterinary surgeon should be consulted. A correct diet and clean water should prevent this problem from ever occurring.

HIBERNATION

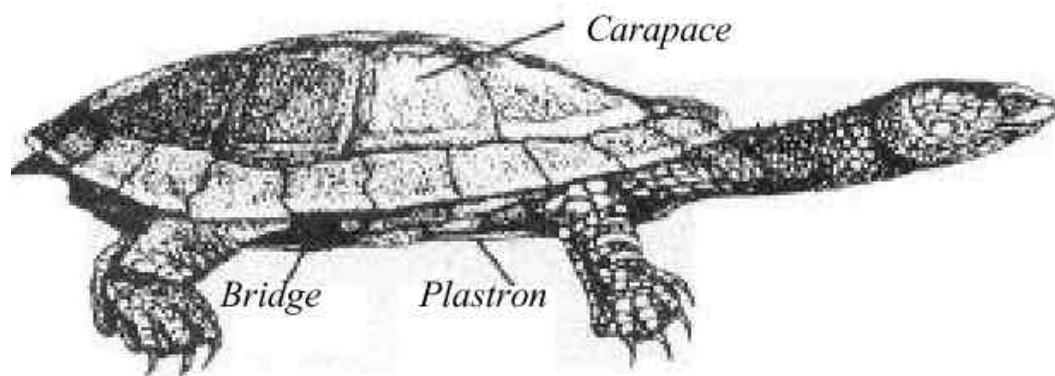
Turtles are cold blooded and can not control body temperature. If left unheated in an aquarium or living in an outdoor pond in winter, low temperatures slow down the animal's bodily functions until they are ticking over just enough to maintain life. Heart rate, breathing and all physical movement are all extremely slow and this condition will be maintained until temperatures rise sufficiently for active life to be resumed. If your turtle is going to hibernate it is recommended that you should stop feeding your turtle one month before cold weather sets in as this will



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allow the digestive tract to be emptied before hibernation commences. Food in the stomach of a hibernating reptile will decompose, often killing the animal. Please don't let baby turtles hibernate in the first year of their life.



SEXING YOUR TURTLE

Freshwater turtles must be at least 12cms long before they can be sexed accurately. Males have a slightly concave plastron and longer tail than a female of a similar size. However these characteristics are not usually very obvious in long-necks. In some older turtles the female attains a larger overall size than the male. Turtles mate in late Spring and lay their eggs in Summer and bury them in deep sand at 27-29 degrees. Long-neck turtles eggs will hatch in 60-75 days. Short-neck turtles eggs will hatch in 45-55 days.

FURTHER READING

Caring for your tortoise by David Griffiths

Keeping long-necked turtles by Darren Green

Keeping short-necked turtles by Darren Green

These three books are available from P&K Pets