



Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta* ssp.)

- Painted turtles are relatively small semi aquatic turtles indigenous from southern and southeastern Canada, through much of the eastern United States in most types of permanent to semi-permanent water bodies.
- These turtles have a blackish, gray, to olive somewhat streamlined carapace with reddish-orange flecks on the marginal scutes, and a pale yellowish to reddish orange plastron varying in color and pattern depending on the subspecies. Some subspecies may also have a reddish orange dorsal stripe. The head, neck, and limbs also have yellowish to reddish stripes as well.
- Common subspecies are the Midland Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta marginata*), Western Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta belli*), Eastern Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta picta*) and Southern Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta dorsalis*).
- Painted turtles may attain longevity of 20-40 years or more with proper care. Sales of turtles under 4" in length are for bona fide educational purposes only.

Size

Adult painted turtles usually reach a carapace (shell) length of 4 ½ -9 inches, which females being larger than males.

Housing

Painted turtles are semi aquatic and powerful swimmers. Provide a sturdy, escape proof aquarium or commercially available turtle tub of sufficient size with an elevated dock or basking area/access to dry land using a substrate dam. Provide a minimum of 10 gallons of space per inch of shell, or about 50-90 gallons for most adult painted turtles. A powerful water filter rated at least twice that of the amount of water in the enclosure is highly recommended for aquatic turtles, as they are messy and require frequent cleaning and regular water changes. Use a submersible water heater with a guard to maintain water temperatures of 75-85 degrees F. Substrate is optional, and foregoing it makes for easier cleaning and maintenance, but small to medium sized gravel can be used. Additional rocks, logs, live or artificial foliage can also be provided for additional foraging and hiding opportunities.

Additional overhead lighting and heating elements are necessary to maintain optimal health and nutrition for these turtles. Provide a basking area or platform with UVB and UVA for your painted turtle to emerge completely from the water and monitor at around 85-90 degrees F.

Feeding/Diet

In the wild, painted turtles are omnivorous to carnivorous, feeding on carrion, small fish, snails, algae, crustaceans, mussels/clams, and other aquatic invertebrates. In captivity, painted turtles can be given a variety of prey or food items including commercialized turtle pellets and diets, small feeder fish, leafy greens such as turnup, mustard, and collard greens, superworms, earthworms, mealworms, feeder roaches or crickets, freeze dried shrimp or krill, and even small frozen/thawed pinkie mice (but avoid to much protein). A varied diet is important, and providing some additional vitamin D3 and calcium supplementation during 2-3 times weekly feeding also is beneficial.

Handling

Captive born and raised painted turtles can become very tame and personable pets, often even approaching their keepers for food. Handling these turtles from the rear of the carapace reduces the chances of being nipped or scratched when they are threatened, however.

****Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens****