

Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society
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Common Name: Painted turtle

Scientific Name: *Chrysemys picta*

Native to: Eastern USA depending on which of the four subspecies.

Size Range: Average adult is 5-8 inches; females are larger than males of same age.

Life span: 15-25 Years

General Appearance: All have a dark black top shell (carapace) with a border containing red markings. The under shell (plastron) can be yellow with red and black markings or red with black markings depending on the subspecies. The head, limbs, neck and tail are dark with yellow or red markings.

Housing requirements:

Enclosure: Should be aquatic. Minimum dimensions for tanks are: width - 3 times the shell length and length - 6 times the shell length. Minimum depth of the water should be as deep as the shell is wide. basking area is needed to allow the turtle to get completely out of the water to dry. UV lighting can be beneficial.

Temperature: The water should be 70-75 F and can be maintained with a submersible aquarium heater. The basking area should be 84-88 F during the daylight period. This can be maintained with an incandescent light.

Substrate: Substrate is not recommended, as frequent water changes make it difficult to clean.

Diet: Feeding should be done every other day with all they can eat in 45 minutes. Remove all food after that time, except for the greens. Just because they beg for food does not necessarily mean they're hungry, this is a trained condition. Diet should be at least 65- 85% meat consisting of commercial turtle food, trout chow, beef heart, cooked chicken, fish live or fresh caught (not frozen). Meat should be dusted once a week with a good herp vitamin containing D3. Dark green leafy vegetables can be used to fill the rest of the diet.

Maintenance: Water should be clean and clear. Waste should be removed whenever it is found. Filtration prolongs the time between water changes, but should not be used as a substitute for water changes. Wastewater should not be emptied into a sink that is used for food preparation or personal hygiene. Hands and any other part of your body that comes in contact with the water should be washed thoroughly with anti-bacterial soap.

Other references or recommended reading:

General Care and Maintenance of Red-Eared Sliders: Philippe de Vosjoli

Encyclopedia of Turtles: Dr. Peter C. H. Pritchard

Turtles of the World: Carl H. Ernst and Roger W. Barbour

Encyclopedia of Keeping and Breeding Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles: A. C. Highfield