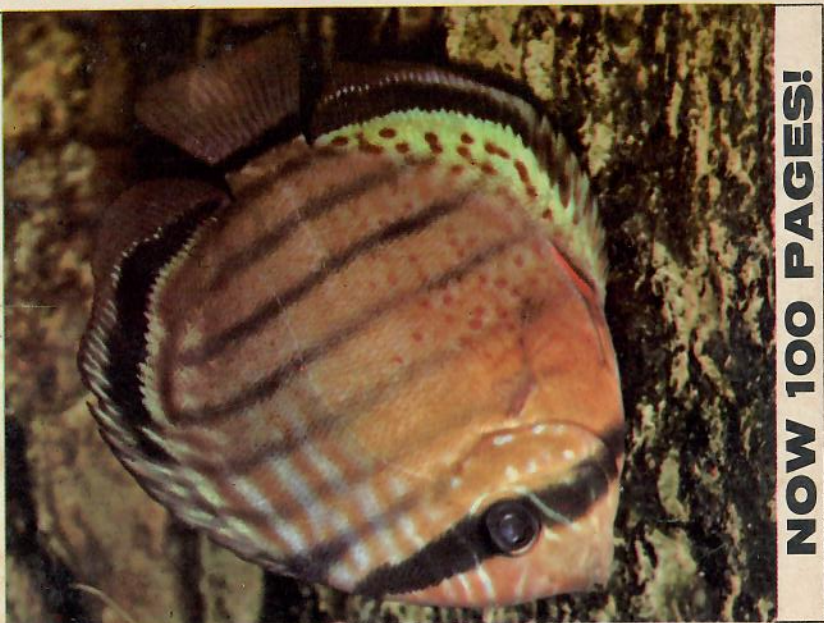


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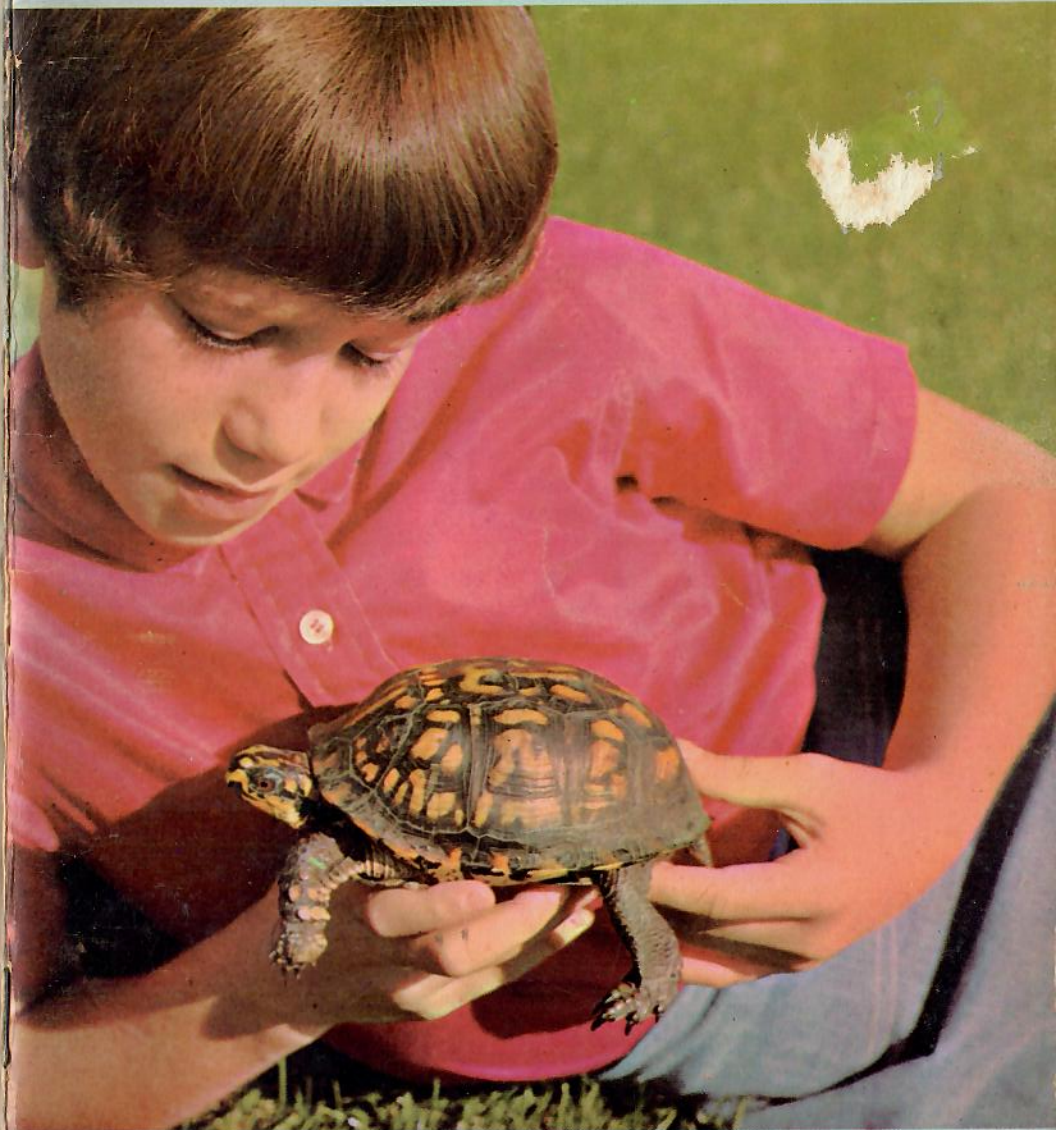
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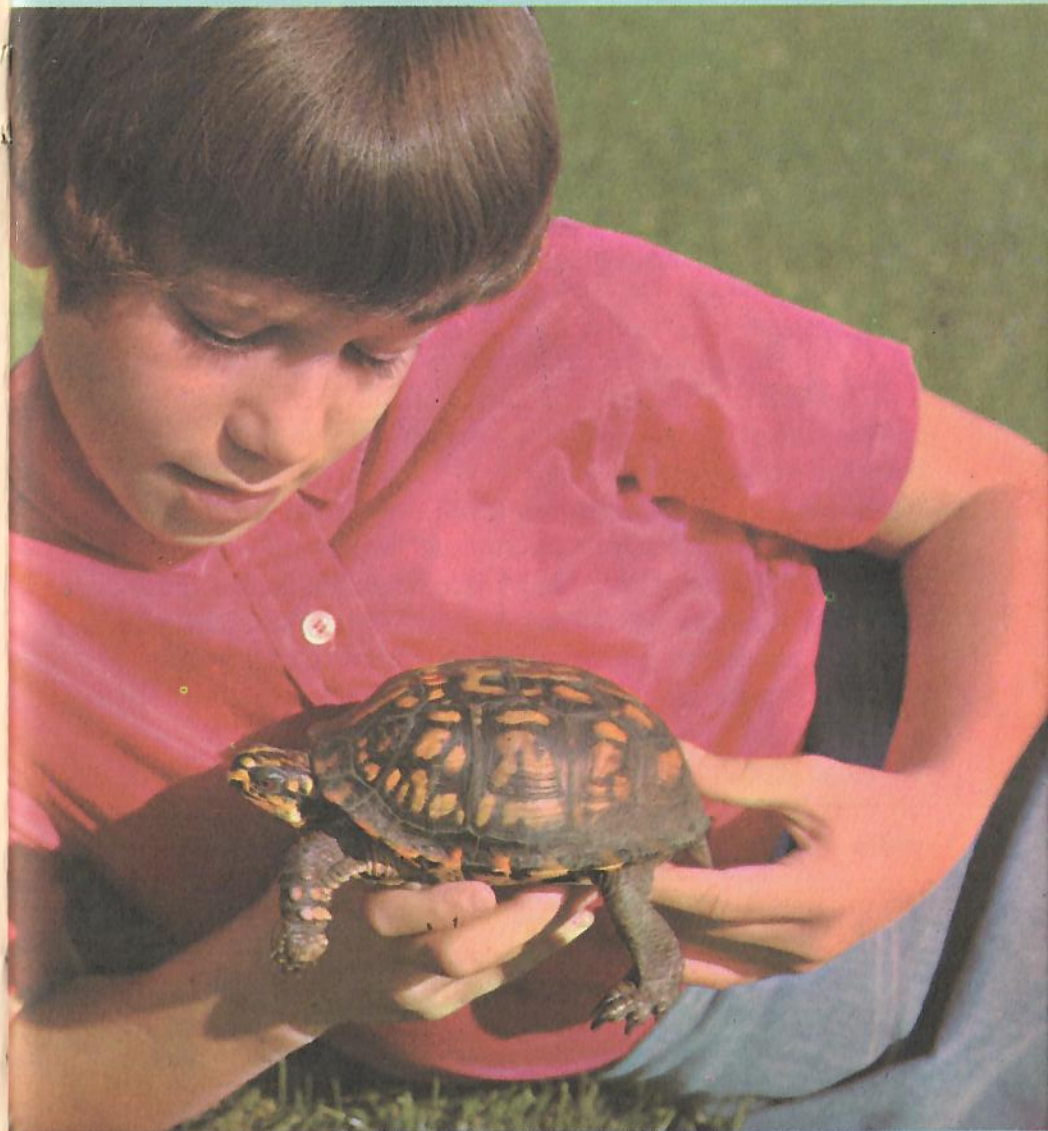
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turtles . . . *in color*

by dr. hobart m. smith



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Cover photo by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.

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Introduction

Millions of small turtlets are sold as novelties in this country every year. Hundreds of thousands find their way into our homes and huge numbers are shipped to foreign fanciers.

Many different kinds of turtles make satisfactory pets. Actually every one of our native turtles, at least at a small size, is acceptable. Larger examples of some kinds, as for example Common Snapping Turtles, Alligator Snapping Turtles, Soft-shelled Turtles, Sliders, Musk Turtles, Mud Turtles, and occasionally others, are unpleasant or even positively dangerous as pets.

Although young turtles make safe pets, land turtles of all kinds are best, seldom if ever biting, feeding readily, and surviving well in captivity. They include the Tortoises, Box Turtles, Wood Turtles, and a few others. Unfortunately none of these are commonly available from commercial dealers.

The kind most often found on sale is the Red-eared Slider. Next most common are the Map Turtles, and third in abundance are the Painted Turtles. All are water turtles and require much the same care in captivity. Since the Red-eared Slider is the most common of all, the general account that follows is based upon the Slider group of turtles, especially the Red-eared species. This is the largest group of native turtles, including some 16 different kinds. All live in ponds and lakes, and may be given the same care in captivity. Comparisons with other groups follow the general account.

The Red-eared Turtle

HABITAT

The range of the Red-eared (or Elegant Slider) Turtle is the Mississippi and Ohio River drainages from Kansas,

Iowa, Illinois, and southern Ohio southward through Texas and Mississippi. Specimens are obtained commercially for the pet trade mostly from the Louisiana bayous, where they breed by the millions. These are aquatic turtles for the most part, inhabiting ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams. They like quiet water and muddy, plant-grown bottoms, but often come out during the day to sun themselves on a rock or partly submerged log.

IDENTIFICATION

The top shell of the turtle is known as the *carapace*, the bottom section as the *plastron*.

A half-grown Red-eared (Elegant Slider) Turtle. The red patches on the sides of the head cover the "ears." Photo by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.



The turtle is bilaterally symmetrical (that is, if you cut one in half you'll have almost two identical pieces). But the top shell (the carapace) is different from the bottom shell (the plastron). Photo by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.

In this species, the side of the head has three to seven stripes extending backward from the rear margin of the eye, the uppermost stripe often including an ovate blood-red expansion covering the ear. Most of the shields of the yellow plastron have one or more dark spots. The carapace, usually without a keel, is smoother, elongated, and more depressed than that of its close cousin, the Yellow-bellied Turtle.

CARE IN CAPTIVITY

The best receptacle in which to keep baby turtles is a glass aquarium 12 inches or more in length. This may be arranged in two ways. The first method, for ease of cleaning and sanitation, is to use wire mesh. A suitable size is one inch by one-half inch, or else ordinary one-half

inch mesh netting, cut to fit snugly inside the aquarium and held about one and one-half inches off the floor by bending down the edges on four sides. The wire netting keeps turtlets from eating decayed leftover food or their own excreta, which they will eat if they see it. In the center of the netting floor, three inches from one end, cut out a space in which to fit a tall drinking glass, on top of which a sloping flat rock may be placed which the water barely covers so the turtle can climb upon it easily. This is necessary for either sun baths or heat baths under an aquarium light over the tank. A square glass or plastic feeding receptacle about three inches square and one and one-half inches high should be kept on the wire mesh floor. Into this, bits of raw meat or fish, meal worms, or earthworms should be placed for feeding. This equipment is non-rusting, and permits a complete, thorough cleaning of the aquarium with steel wool every two days. The water depth would be about six inches, with the sloping rock partly submerged.

The second method of arranging a turtle aquarium isn't quite as easy to keep clean, but looks more natural. Here, a zinc tray can be made with a one-half inch edge in which white pebbles are placed level. This tray would extend the length of the tank and slope halfway out of the water to three inches at the top part. The aquarium used this time would be 12 inches long by only six inches high. Bits of raw meat or fish should be placed in the water with a leaf of dark green lettuce daily. The water in the tank should be deep enough (two to four inches) to permit the turtlets to eat and swim under the surface.

Most turtles are shipped from Louisiana and other Gulf States. Consequently, for more activity and inducement to eat, the best temperature for them is between 70 degrees and 80 degrees. They may be made comfortable in cold weather with an ordinary aquarium reflector and bulb

under which they will bask to enjoy the necessary warmth. A glass cover should be over the other half of the aquarium top to keep in the heat. Especially at night, when the heating system of the home is turned off, sudden drops in temperature are very harmful. A small, inexpensive, thermostatically controlled aquarium heater or 15- to 25-watt light bulb is a useful adjunct. However, the thermostatically controlled heater provides surer control.

The water should be kept free from any decaying food. When refilling the aquarium, water should always be lukewarm.

SUN BATHING

The Red-eared Turtles, like most others, love to get up on a dry place and bask in the sun. This is extremely important for their health. When several are kept together, one will climb over the others to be in the sunniest spot. When too many do this, they will all comically topple over and fall in the water. A word of caution on sunbathing, however; a hot mid-afternoon summer sun will soon kill your turtles if they can't get in the shade. Summer sun in the morning or late afternoon is sufficient, and one hour a day the year round is the minimum requirement for good health. The reasons turtles enjoy and need sunshine are various. Growth is stimulated, vitamin D absorbed, and the warmth is enjoyable, contributing to good health, longevity, and activity. In the wild, leeches and other parasites are dislodged by steady exposure to the sun, the growth of algae on the shell is retarded, and fungus infection prevented. If your turtle is able to go in and out of the sunshine as it wishes for the greater part of the day, it would, of course, be best for it.

FEEDING IN THE WILD

Before giving feeding directions in captivity, the fancier should first know what these turtles consume in their native habitats. The Red-eared Turtle is mostly a carnivorous reptile that eats aquatic insects, snails,



Since the invention of Miracle Freeze-dried Tubifex worms, the loss of turtles due to malnutrition has dropped significantly. Turtles like these worms so much they will eagerly take them from your hand. Feed them small bite-sized bits which they will drag under the water to swallow.

Photo by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.

crayfish, tadpoles, small species of fish, and various water plants. It is also a scavenger, consuming dead animals found in the water.



All you really need for a pair of small Red-ear Turtles is a large plastic turtle bowl, Miracle Freeze-dried Turtle Treet or Tubifex worms, vitamin "Hard Shell Drops," and an antibiotic bath in case your turtle develops sores. Photo by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.

FEEDING IN CAPTIVITY

Raw meat and raw fish combined with live insects are the main diet for turtles. The pieces should be cut small enough to be swallowed. If obtainable, earthworms, cockroaches, other insects, and small tadpoles are welcome additions. It is very amusing to watch two or more turtlets having a tug-of war over an earthworm, each one trying to shove down as much of the earthworm as possible. Commercially prepared turtle food, which consists mostly of dried insects, may be given as an *adjunct* to the diet, as there is not sufficient nourishment in it to keep a turtle alive for long. The main secret of success with turtles is raw meat, live insects, and green lettuce,

plus heat from the sun and/or light bulb. The outer dark green leaves of romaine lettuce should be given daily. This open-type lettuce has the largest number of dark green vitamin-filled leaves. Water cress is another palatable green for little turtles, which prefer succulent rather than fibrous types of greens.

Food should be placed in a glass or plastic feeding dish as previously mentioned; give only as much as will be consumed in half an hour, except for a lettuce leaf which may be left in the aquarium all day, but should be removed daily. During the warmer months turtlets will eat every day. In winter they may eat only once or twice a week, and sometimes during the late fall and early winter they will not eat for several weeks, living instead on their fat. Indifference to food at this time is not necessarily a sign of illness. It more probably is the tendency to hibernate, although living in a warm aquarium. Turtles are encouraged to eat when their water is tepid. An overhead aquarium light assists in this.

ILLNESS

Respiratory diseases, usually resulting from cold, and abnormal shell growth or other symptoms caused by a calcium deficiency are the chief ailments of turtles kept in captivity. Antibiotics are effective in treatment of respiratory ailments, which may be evidenced by a wide variety of signs, including obstructed nares, lassitude, loss of appetite, and swollen eyes, often with closed lids. Any broad-spectrum antibiotic is satisfactory; terramycin is especially recommended, and is most effective by injection. The turtle must be kept warm or the improvements will not be substantial. Local treatment may be useful, applying warm boric acid solution with cotton or a medicine dropper, or using penicillin or sulfathiazole-zinc ophthalmic ointment, available in one-eighth-ounce applicator tubes. Calcium intake may be augmented by feeding small whole frozen fish, complete with bones.

FUNGUS

From an infection acquired in the tank or from lack of sunshine, your turtle may acquire a fungus disease, for which various treatments may be administered. You can buy a fungus powder used for tropical fish as well as for turtles. Instructions for use come with the box. A home remedy is to place the turtle for one hour in a gallon of water in which a tablespoonful of salt has been dissolved, or else swab your turtle with plain vinegar, dip in water to remove excess, and replace in its tank.

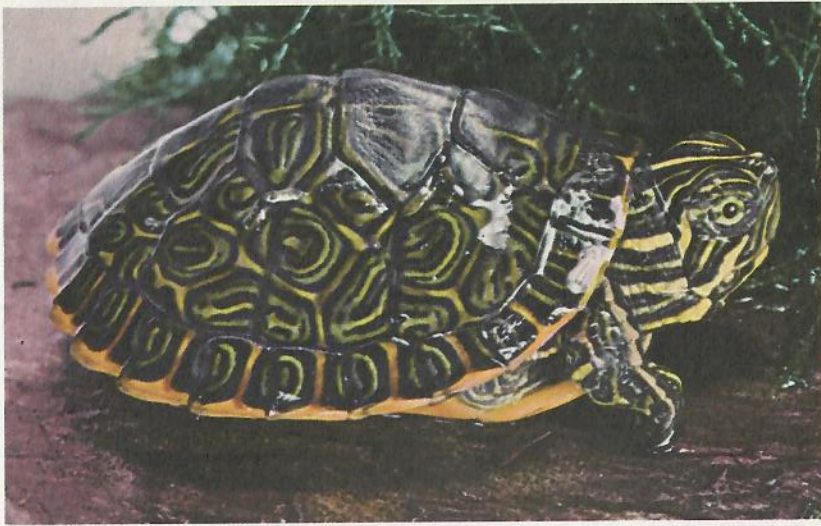
A third treatment is to swab affected parts with kerosene (not near the eyes), and place the turtle in a large pan of room temperature water for an hour before replacing in its tank. Enough vinegar or kerosene will remain on the turtle to clear up and inhibit the fungus growth.

MOLTING

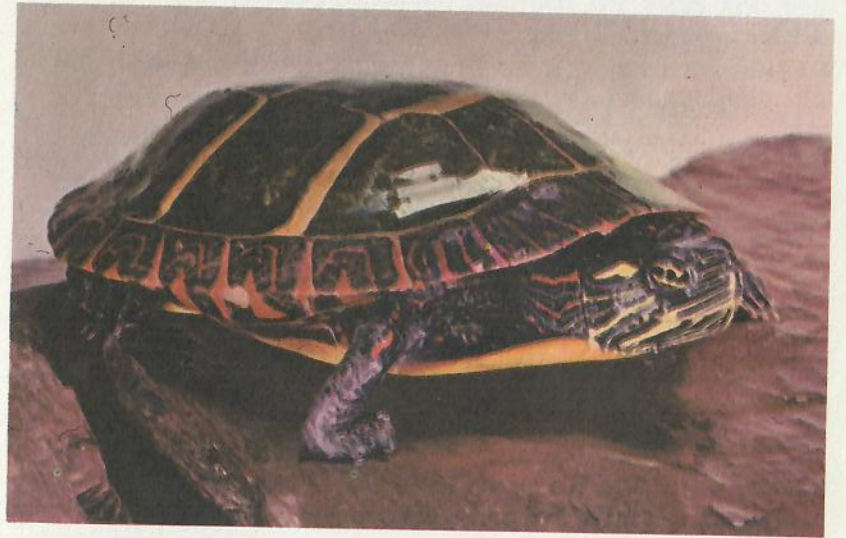
We usually associate molting with birds, but, although few people realize it, turtles molt also. The epidermal shields of the carapace and plastron become detached and are replaced at periodic intervals by a larger size shield in keeping with their growth. In this connection, turtlets that have been enameled should have this enamel removed after a couple of months, as it interferes with the growth of the carapace.

GROWTH AND LONGEVITY

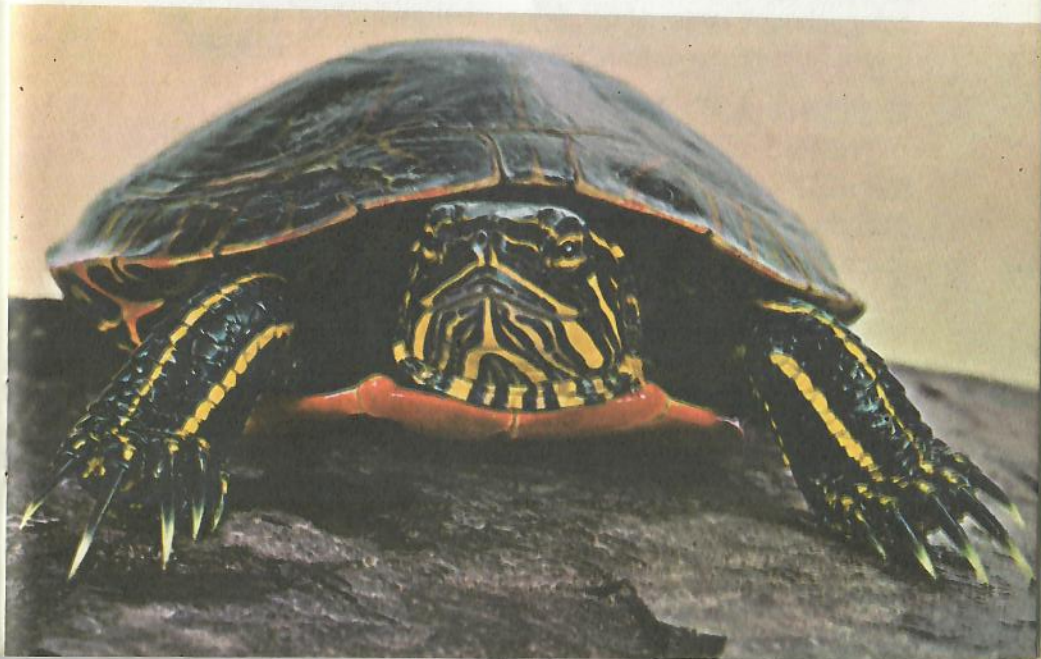
The average size for full-grown adult Red-eared Turtles is about eight to eight and one-half inches for males and nine to nine and one-half inches for females. The female of this species is always the larger, and requires a minimum of six, but not more than eight, years to attain maturity. The male is mature when three and one-half to four inches in length. These tiny turtlets, the size of a 50-cent piece when you buy them, when given the best of care are able to live many years.



Above: A hatchling Hieroglyphic Turtle, *Pseudemys floridana hieroglyphica*. Below: A hatchling Southern Painted Turtle, *Chrysemys picta dorsalis*. Photos by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.



Above: The Eastern Painted Turtle, *Chrysemys picta picta*. Below: The Western Painted Turtle, *Chrysemys picta bellii*. This is the largest and most colorful race of Painted Turtle. Photos by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.



DISTINGUISHING THE SEXES

In most turtles, it is easy to distinguish the sexes because the male has a concave indentation in the center of the plastron near the hind legs, while the female's plastron is perfectly flat. The female is usually the larger. When the tail is extended, the anus or cloaca of the male extends beyond the rear edge of the carapace, while in the female it lies below or in front of this edge. (A cloaca is the organ reptiles, birds, chickens, etc., have as the one opening into which the various ducts lead for urination, excretion, copulation, and the laying of eggs or live young, as is the case with some snakes.) On the male's forelimbs the claws are twice as long as its hind-limb claws or of the fore-limb claws of the female. The purpose of these long claws in mating will be explained later. Some large males of this species become very dark in color when they become older. The carapace and head markings almost disappear, and the plastron becomes dark brown. These dark males are so different that for years they were taken for a different species until the color change was noticed by chelonian students. It is impossible to distinguish the sex of very small turtles.

MATING AND NESTING

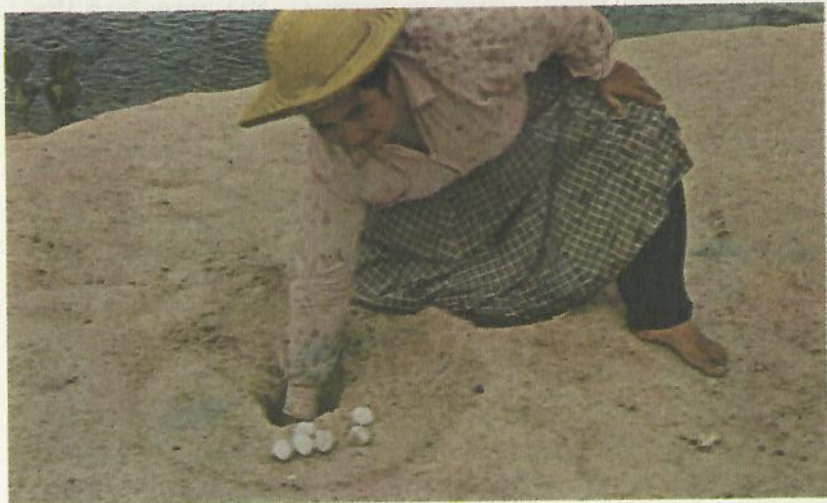
The Red-eared Turtle mates under water. In courtship, the male swims in front of the female so that his outstretched forelimbs (their palms) turned outward can just reach her face. He then proceeds to stroke her chin and cheeks by moving his slender nails rapidly up and down. These vibrations are kept up for only a second or two at a time, but are repeated at frequent intervals. The male maintains his position by swimming either backward or forward while the female remains unconcerned. Enough of such caressing eventually opens her mind to more intimate advances. Several males may pay court at the same time to one indifferent female. Copulation is accomplished by the male mounting the carapace of the

female. The greater distance between the anus and the base of the tail in the male aids in this effort. The tail is free-moving.

Nesting for American turtles usually occurs during June and early July. The eggs are elliptical (both ends the same size) in an oblong shape. Turtle eggs in contrast to hens' eggs contain mostly yolk and a small amount of white (albumen); the shell is permeable enough to permit the passage of air and moisture. It is possible for a single mating to fertilize not only all the eggs of that season, but diminishing percentages of eggs for two, three, or more seasons to come. Young female Red-eared Turtles lay an average of ten eggs per clutch, older females from 15 to 18 per clutch. In building a nest in the wild, the female turtle selects an open spot protected by weeds but exposed to the direct rays of the sun. A sandy location is usually selected. In the egg-laying season the ground may be sunbaked, dry, and hard, but Mrs. Turtle is prepared for this. The bladder and cloaca are distended with water to be used for softening the ground when she leaves the pond, lake, or river. She uses one rear limb at a time when digging the nesting hole, releasing water as she proceeds. The eggs are then laid in the hole and covered up with a half-inch to three inches of mud or wet sand. This helps to keep the temperature and moisture content of the nest uniform.

The female is oblivious of everything once she has begun to lay. The sun's warmth and the humidity of the nest eventually make the eggs hatch. The turtles, through instinct, then proceed in a downward direction, or toward intense light, where their senses tell them water lies. They learn how to hide, but their greatest danger occurs during babyhood and while the eggs are incubating.

Baby turtles are different from their parents, and even expert herpetologists have difficulty in identifying the young of the different species. The shell of the hatchling is nearly round and the tail much longer relative to size



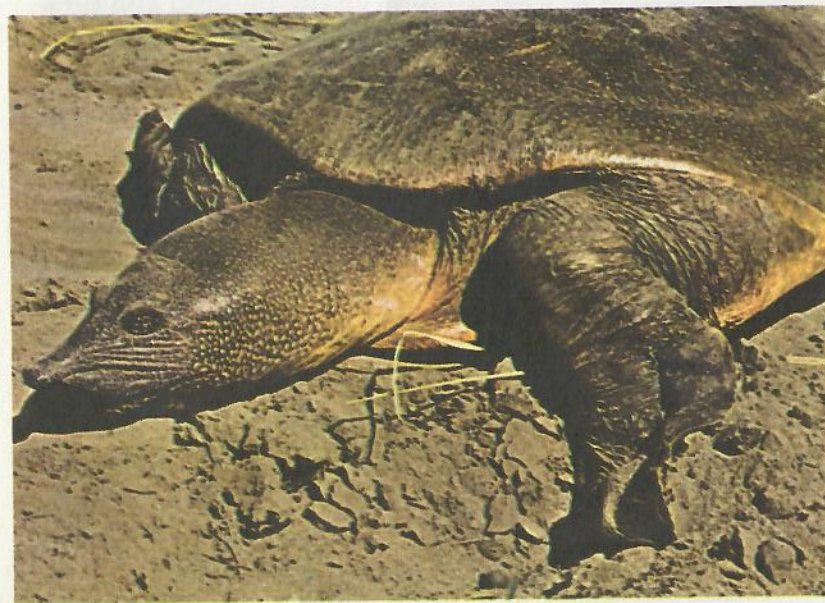
In many areas of the world the local people collect turtle eggs and eat them. These are eggs of the Amazon River Turtle. They can be boiled for days and the albumen (egg white) never gets hard but always remains in a liquid state. Photo by Harald Schultz.

than in the adults. Newly hatched turtles are able to live weeks or even months without having a bit of food, and turtles hatched in late summer or fall hibernate on empty stomachs, living on the fat they were born with until spring. This is because the large amount of egg yolk is so nourishing to the embryo turtle.

In captivity, you may hatch turtle eggs by punching holes in the bottom of a tin can and filling it with a mixture of sand and peatmoss, and placing the eggs in the center. Cover the can with a piece of burlap. The can should be immersed in water until the sand is thoroughly wet, then placed in a sunny spot in a warm, sheltered location. When the sand-peatmoss dries out, immerse again, replacing in the sun. Turtlets will eventually hatch out. If the sun is not available to you, turtle eggs may be buried in five inches of sand-peatmoss in a small aquarium with a reflector and 25-watt bulb over it. A small pane of glass should cover the exposed top.



Two of the 24 species of soft-shelled turtles. *Trionyx triunguis*, below, from Africa, photographed by Sven Mathiasson, and *Trionyx ferox* from the southeastern United States, photographed by Peter C. H. Pritchard.



Other Kinds of Turtles

SOFT-SHELLED TURTLES

Few average amateur reptile fanciers know that there are such creatures as soft-shelled turtles. These very interesting reptiles belong to the family Trionychidae, represented in the United States by the genus *Trionyx*.

There are six genera of 24 species now living of the many that existed in prehistoric times. Two species are found in the New World, and only in the United States, the others being restricted to Asia and Africa. These very odd-looking turtles, in many ways, have more desirable points than the hard-shells. For one thing, they are much more active when observed in an ordinary aquarium, and most amusing when two or more tackle an earthworm. The worm must be small enough for them to handle, otherwise they will be afraid of it. Instead of having the hard shell the average person associates with turtles, the soft-shells have a degenerate shell covered by a leathery skin, forming soft, pliable edges on the plastron and carapace. They are mainly aquatic with webbed feet terminating in claws. Among the Old World species of *Trionyx*, the leathery skin of the carapace sinks down between the ribs when it is out of the water, thus leaving the ribs projecting in outline.

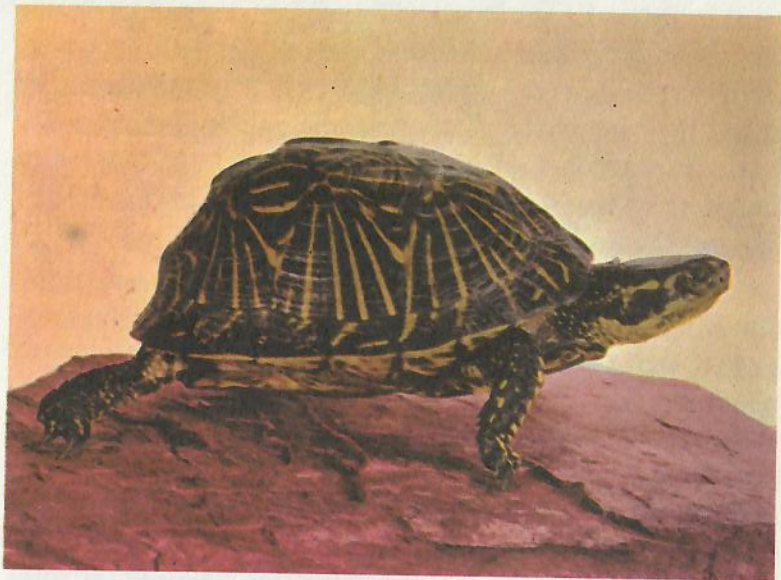
An outstanding characteristic of all soft-shells is the snorkel snout, which gives them an odd-appearing pointed nose appealing to the turtle fancier. Their body is very flat and mostly oval in shape. Oddity and activity make them desirable small pets. They seldom come on dry land, but are able to walk and run, although clumsily. One African species, *Trionyx triunguis*, is the largest of the soft-shelled turtles, being over three feet long. Its wide range is from the Nile to the Senegal River and south to the Congo.

Young specimens of *Trionyx* are available and may be

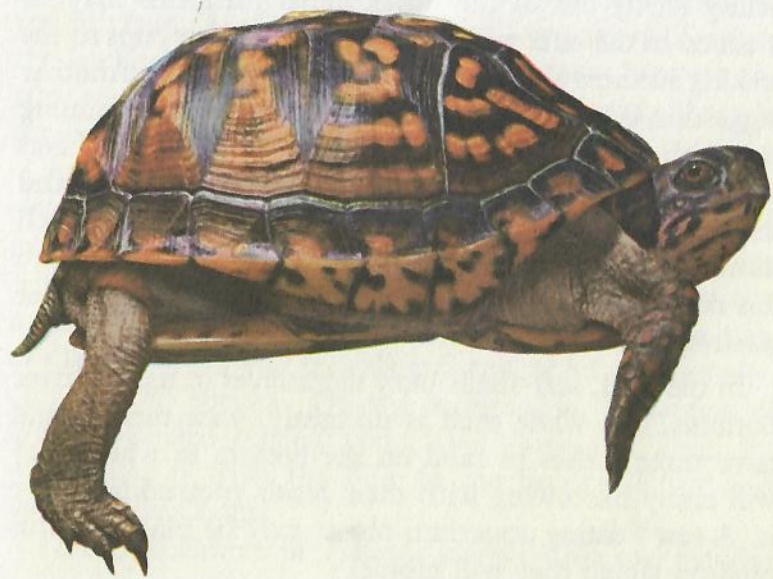
kept in an ordinary small (12-inch) or larger aquarium tank filled with water. Because they are aquatic, you will enjoy watching them swim, fight over a juicy tid-bit, or chase live minnows. They can remain submerged for hours in mud or sand under shallow water the surface of which they reach by stretching the long neck without moving the body.

They may live thus indefinitely without ever coming out of the water. However, a piece of a smooth water-soaked branch or an inner section of thick waterlogged tree bark, even slimy, should be provided for them to climb upon, as they enjoy sunning themselves, although not to the extent of other turtles. As for other turtle species, direct sunshine should be available one hour per day for them to bask in. A cement or rough stone ornament should never be provided for this purpose, as their tender plastron will become bruised and worn, causing ulcers, which usually do not get a chance to heal and ultimately cause death. A slab of marble or sheet of plastic or rubber may serve equally well for this purpose—projecting partly out of the water. Such platforms may be attached to the tank with small rubber suction cups so the basking surfaces slope gradually out of the water. Another suggestion in place of the foregoing is to make a sunning rack with a small plastic tray four to six inches wide and one inch in depth. Fill this with fine beach sand and suspend it in the aquarium no more than half an inch above the water level. Soft-shells can easily climb onto this rack to sun themselves without bruising their tender plastron.

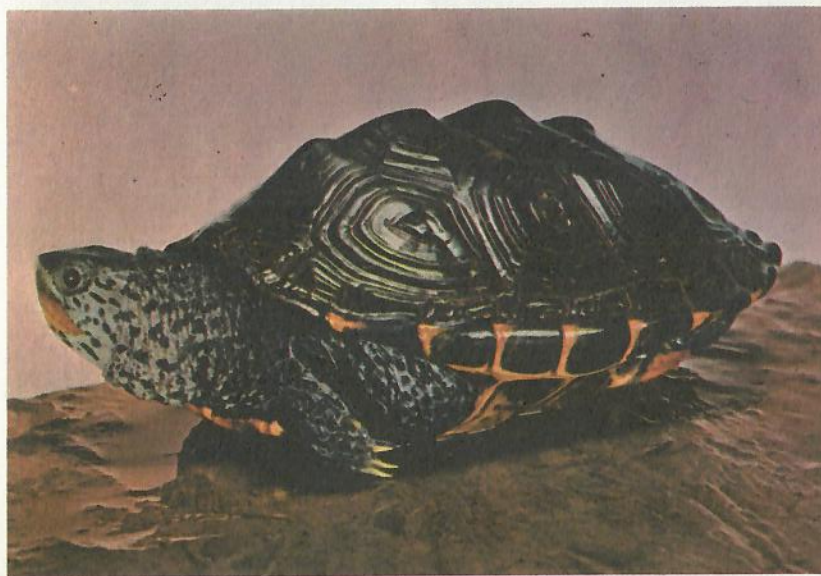
In the wild, soft-shells bury themselves in muddy river bottoms, and while mud is unsightly, your tank should have three inches of sand on the bottom in which they will enjoy burrowing with their heads protruding above it. A few floating aquarium plants may be placed in this tank on which they will nibble.



The Florida Box Turtle, *Terrapene carolina baurii*, is readily identified by the radiating stripes on the shell. Photo by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod. Below is the Common Box Turtle, *Terrapene carolina carolina*. Photo by Mervin F. Roberts.



The Mississippi Map Turtle, *Graptemys kohni*, above. Below: The Diamond-back Terrapin, *Malaclemys terrapin*. Photos by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.



Feeding—Soft-shelled turtles are mostly carnivorous and in the wild feed on fish, frogs, snails, mussels, crayfish, insect larvae, and tadpoles, which they either chase and grab, being fast swimmers, or else snatch in passing as they lie buried in mud with the head protruding.

In captivity, the small turtles, two or three inches in diameter, which you purchase, will accept commercial turtle food, ant eggs dried or freshly dug from an anthill, bits of raw fish and raw meat, small insects, earthworms over which they will have a tug of war until they come apart, and other food small enough for them to handle. If one has a tempting morsel, the others will chase in hot pursuit to try to grab it. A small feeding once a day is sufficient, and give only what they will clean up at one time. Once a week, a drop of cod-liver oil may be placed on their food: afterward, remove any oil from the water surface to prevent contamination and decay. Tender greens should be given, such as a bit of green lettuce, or a section of water cress, roots and all, which will keep for quite some time in their aquarium.

Sexes—The female is always the larger when full grown, and the tail just reaches the edge of the carapace, while the tail of the male projects beyond the carapace.

The average soft-shell in the U.S. grows to from nine to 18 inches in length, depending on the species.

Kinds of soft-shells available to the fancier in the U.S. are: Southern Soft-shell, Spiny Soft-shell, Emory's Soft-shell, and Spineless Soft-shell, the last the smallest, five to seven inches when adult.

PAINTED TURTLES

These U.S. turtles are common and widely distributed. They are divided into four subspecies having pronounced differences. These are the Eastern, Central, Western, and Southern. Their size when adult is about six inches.

They live naturally in ponds and streams, and require much the same care in captivity as the Sliders.

TERRAPINS

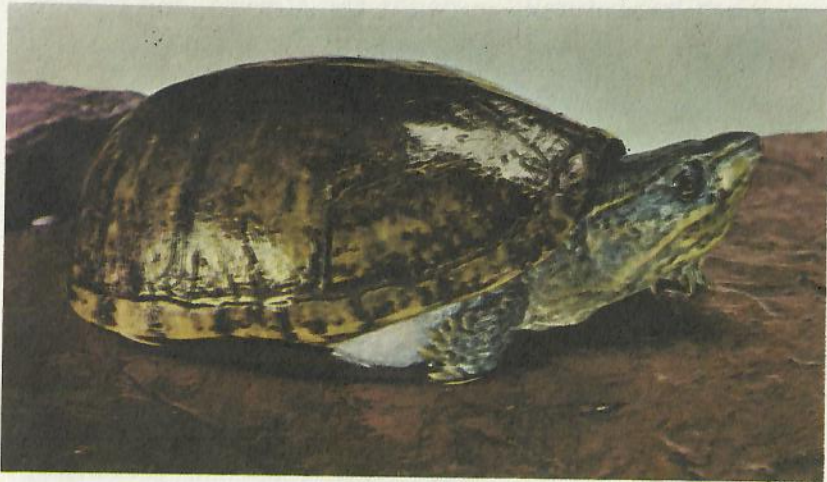
Turtles of this group are strictly aquatic, spending most of their time in the water, except for sunbathing. They are edible and have been propagated artificially for the market. They are fed chopped raw fish, oysters, clams, crabs, etc. The Northern and Southern Diamond-back Terrapins are best for eating. As pets, terrapins are cute, having conspicuous black lines running along the shields of the carapace. Besides the two mentioned, there are the Mississippi, Texas, Mangrove, and Florida Diamond-back Terrapins.

BOX TURTLES

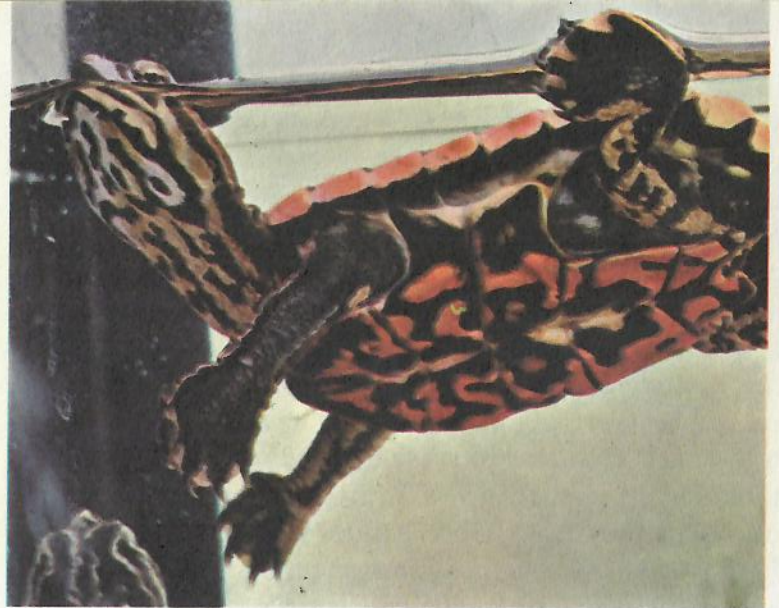
The various species of this partly land-loving turtle make interesting pets. In nature they prefer water where they can hide when young. When adult, however, they are found walking in the woods, but on very hot mid-summer days are found near water or swamps. Their turtle tank should be one-quarter water and the balance a hard surface such as a board or one-half inch wire mesh netting bent up four inches from the tank floor. Thus there will be four inches of water for this land-loving turtle to take an occasional swim. There are several species, the Common Box Turtle being the most popular. Others are the Florida, Three-toed, Gulf Coast, and Ornate. When frightened, these turtles are able to completely close up the plastron when the head and legs are drawn in.

SNAPPING TURTLES

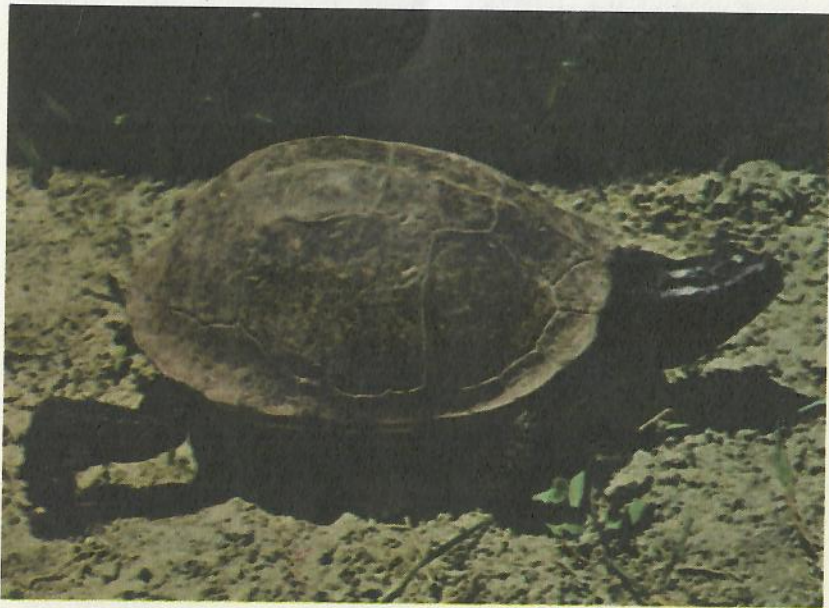
Two kinds are found in the U.S. One, the Alligator Snapper, gets very large (at least to 200 pounds), has



The foul-smelling "Stink-pot" Turtle, *Sternotherus odoratus*. Photo by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod. Below is the Gulf Coast Box Turtle, *Terrapene carolina major*. Photo by Peter C. H. Pritchard.



Above: The very colorful South American species *Phrynops geoffroanus*. Below: A European tortoise. Photos by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod and Horst Muller.



very powerful jaws and a fearsome appearance. It is rarely sold in pet stores, although young specimens make interesting and safe pets. The other species, the Common Snapper, is occasionally available, the young being quite grotesque and ugly. The young are harmless, but when adult and out of the water, they have bad dispositions and won't hesitate to bite if annoyed. Babies are desirable for the novice fancier, as they are very hardy, and will eat almost anything in the way of raw meat, fish, vegetables, and fruit. Feeding takes place under water. Their tank should contain a few inches of water, with a rock on which they can sunbathe or bask under an aquarium light.

TORTOISES

Three kinds of tortoises occur in southern United States from Florida to California. They reach a moderately large size, maximum around ten pounds at a length of one foot. They live exclusively on land, but need water in which to soak occasionally. The food is exclusively vegetation, including grass, lettuce, celery, berries, and fruit of various sorts. These turtles are exceedingly docile, never attempting to bite. They live for years in captivity if well cared for, and make the best pets of all turtles.

Specimens can be staked out on a chain in a yard for the duration of warm weather. They will subsist exclusively upon grass and weeds. A wooden box or other cover, placed preferably in the shade, should be within reach of the chain. A shallow water container should be placed in easy access, preferably sunken so it is flush with the surface of the ground. Tortoises thus staked out soon develop a regular schedule of emergence, sunning, browsing, and soaking. During winter the tortoises can be released in a cool basement to hibernate, but they should be soaked in water at least once a month to prevent dehydration.

MAP TURTLES

These are river and lake species, of some nine different kinds, distinctive in having the rear edge of the shell strongly notched, and a high, notched ridge down the middle of the back. They do not live particularly well in captivity, but will live for some time upon a diet of lettuce and other greens, and bits of earthworm. They require the same sort of cage as the sliders. As adults they eat primarily small clams and snails, and various water plants.

MUSK AND MUD TURTLES

These are generally dark-colored turtles living in muddy streams, ponds, swamps, and marshes. The young are very small, and may be kept in captivity in much the same way as the sliders. The older specimens when freshly caught have a strong, unpleasant body odor not noticeable in the young. There are about 12 different kinds, some with markings on the head, or stripes on the upper shell.

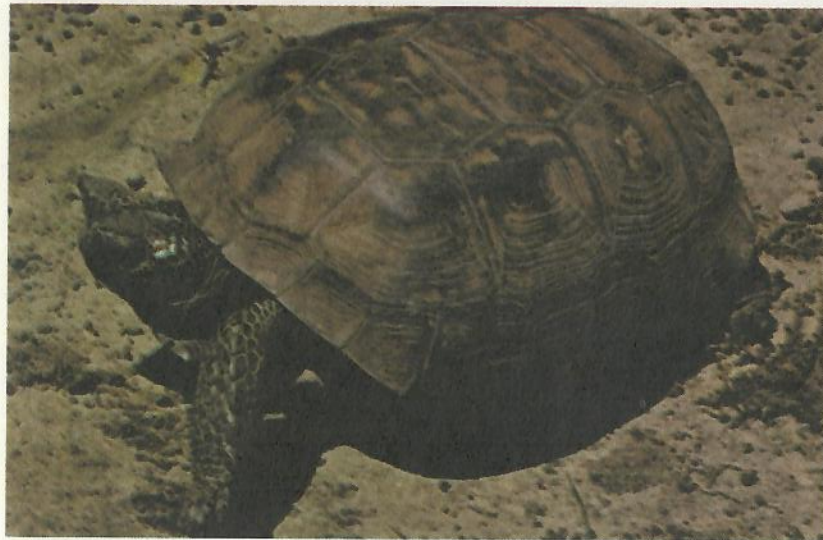
OTHER TURTLES

The Spotted Turtle, Wood Turtle, Pond Turtle, Semi-box Turtle, and Redcheeked Turtle are five similar kinds of turtles, all making docile and interesting pets, but seldom offered for sale.

Wood Turtles—The habits of these attractive turtles resemble those of box turtles, as they like to wander about woods and fields. They can be kept in the same manner as the box. Wood Turtles are easy to identify by the many fine ridges on the shell, the notched upper jaw, and an orange color on the under side of the limbs. These and the box turtles eat their food on land, which may be cut up lettuce, cabbage, fruits, berries, earthworms, a little raw meat, or fish. They are quite intelligent, and like some other turtles will eat from the fingers and come to

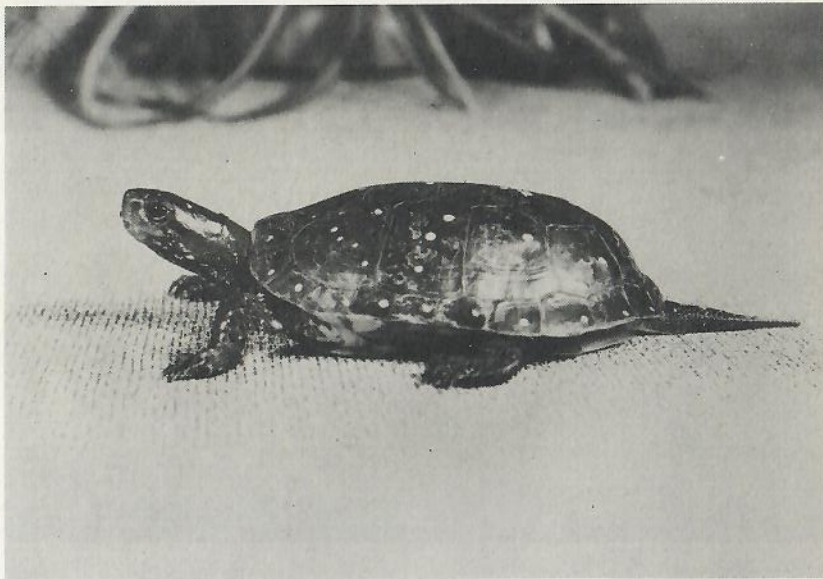


Above: The Common Snapping Turtle, *Chelydra serpentina*. Below: The Alligator Snapping Turtle (a young specimen), *Macrochelys temminckii*. Photos by Dr. Herbert R. Axelrod.

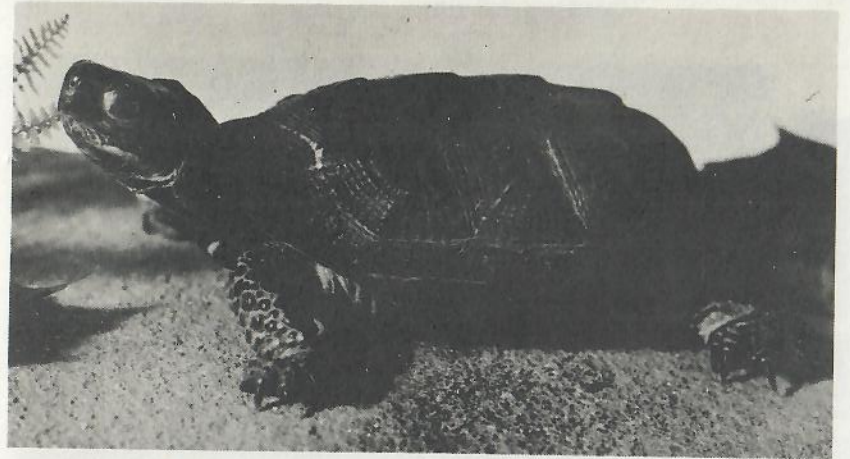
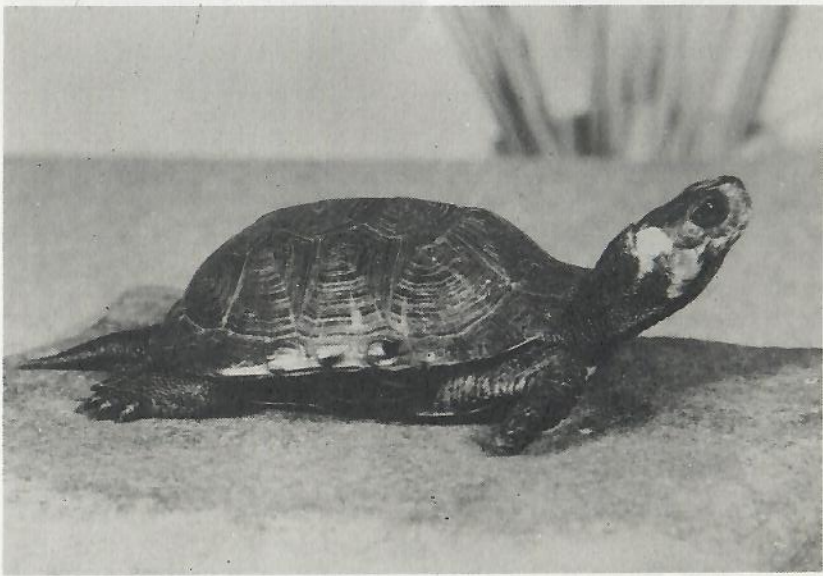


Above: Gopher Tortoise, *Gopherus polyphemus*. Below: Berlandier's Tortoise, *Gopherus berlandieri*. Photos by Peter C. H. Pritchard.





Above: The Spotted Turtle, *Clemmys guttata*. This is an attractive aquatic species.
Below: Redcheeked Turtle, *Clemmys muhlenbergi*. Photos by Robert J. Church.



Wood Turtle, *Clemmys insculpta*. Photos by Robert J. Church.

their owner when food is held out to them. The claws of the forefeet assist in holding food down while eating.

Spotted Turtle—This is a species found in ponds and small streams, and occasionally on land. It eats small insects and worms.

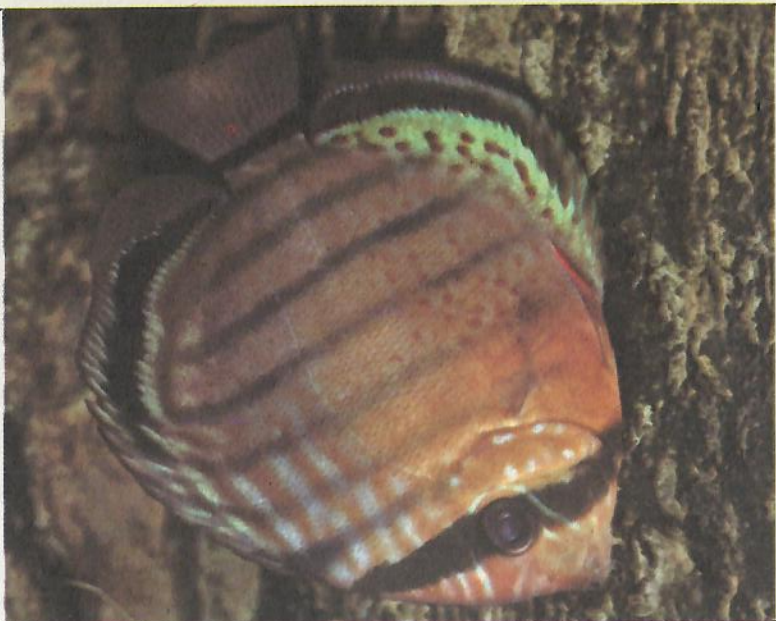
Redcheeked Turtle—A large, reddish or yellowish patch on the cheek distinguishes this species, occurring in bogs, wet meadows, and small streams. It is often called the Muhlenberg Turtle. Both animal and plant food are acceptable. Some individuals prefer to eat under water, others on land.

Pond Turtle—This is a west coast species found typically in quiet, often muddy, water. Both animal and plant food is eaten; individual preferences must be determined to be sure of proper feeding. In captivity a pool of water is required, as for sliders.

Semibox Turtle—Often called the Blanding Turtle. It has a finely yellow-speckled, dark upper shell and a hinged lower shell that can partially close. The species occurs typically in swampy or pondlike situations, where it feeds upon insects, earthworms, carrion, and apparently some vegetation.

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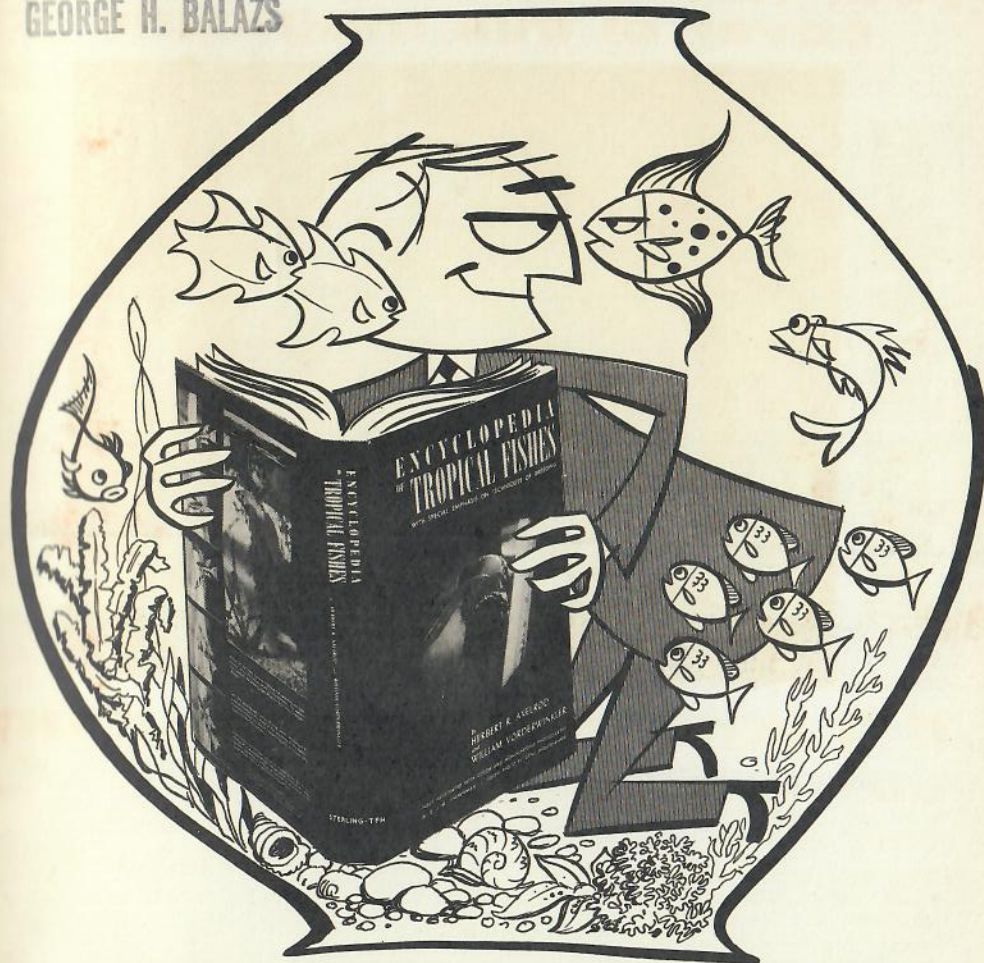
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