

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Black Wood Turtle (*Rhinoclemmys funerea*)

General Information

Black wood turtles are large semi aquatic turtle that originates from southern Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and northern Panama. They are typically found near bodies of water such as fresh water marshes, swamps, ponds, and rivers. These turtles are fairly large and can exceed 12 inches in length. During the breeding season females can lay up to four clutches a year with 2-4 eggs in each clutch.

Temperature and UV Lighting

Black wood turtles need to be kept between 85-90 degrees during the day and the temperature can drop to about 70 at night. Humidity needs to be maintained between 60-80% and this can be accomplished by daily misting. Black wood turtles require 12-14 hours of UVB light each day for proper health and growth. This light allows the turtle to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D3 produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium in the turtles' diet. In general it's what makes a turtles' bones hard and without it they can die. This process of inadequate UVB and calcium is called Metabolic Bone Disease. When kept outdoors, no UVB lighting is needed, natural sunlight covers all requirements. Also, it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you're not sure if your UV light is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test the light for you.



Housing

The cage for a black wood turtle should have enough room for it to move around easily. Our recommendation is a 40 gallon or larger terrarium with a very large water bowl. These turtles love to swim, an ideal set up would allow the turtle to completely submerge itself. Black wood turtles can also be kept outside in areas where the weather is similar to their natural habitat. If you plan to keep your turtle outside make sure the area is secure. These turtles can dig and have been known to escape under fences.

Bedding

The best type of bedding would be some type of bark or Zoo Meds' Eco Earth. These beddings hold moisture very well allowing a higher humidity in the cage. Ideally, the bedding should also be kept a few inches deep to provide a place to burrow.

Calcium

Black wood turtles also require a calcium and vitamin supplement. This supplement works with the UVB light allowing the turtle to receive the proper amounts of calcium and vitamins. This should be used every day as babies and reduced to 1-2 times a week as adults. Calcium is sold in a powder form and is sprinkled on the insects, fruits, and vegetables that you feed your turtle. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder. When kept indoors the supplement must contain Vitamin D3, because the UVB light alone does not produce enough D3 by itself. Once the turtle is large enough to live outdoors, you cannot use a D3 supplement. Natural sunlight allows the turtle to produce the perfect amount of D3 to keep it healthy. Over supplementation of D3 can be harmful to your turtle.

Food

Black wood turtles are omnivores and their diet needs to be balanced between live foods, fruits, and vegetables. Ideal live foods are superworms, mealworms, waxworms, earthworms, snails, and fish. Live food should make up 30% of the diet. The other 70% percent of their diet should include the following fruits and vegetables; collard greens, red leaf lettuce, green leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, spinach, zucchini, apples, bananas, strawberries, figs, peaches, mango, papaya, cantaloupe, grapes, blackberries, and blueberries. A mixed diet of these food items, five to seven times per week, is ideal and will ensure proper growth and health.

Cleaning and Handling

Any fecal matter or left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The bedding should be completely changed once a month and fresh clean water should be provided at all times. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner, we recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Box turtles can be handled on a daily basis and always wash your hands after handling them.

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Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085

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