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## **Hinge-Back Tortoise Care Sheet**

The Hinge-back Tortoise originate from the sub-Saharan Africa. Different species and subspecies have slightly different requirements, occupying a range of habitats, with some being more accustomed to savannah grasslands such as the Bells hinge back while others originate from forest regions such as the Schweigger's hingeback. But the following care sheet gives a basic summary of their needs

They DO NOT HIBERNATE.

### **Housing**

- Ideally in vivariums for these species with adequate ventilation
- Humidity is important for this species and has to be taken in balance with ventilation requirements
- Hides are required to provide security they should be placed in the warm and the cool areas.
- Suitable substrates such as newspaper, topsoil, AstroTurf please ensure the substrate cannot be ingested as this can cause blockages and prove fatal.
- Enclosure should be cleaned once weekly and spot cleaned every day.

### **Temperatures and Humidity**

- Basking area is required of 32°C
- Cool end should be maintained at 24°C
- Background heat can be provided with a tubular heater especially when adults and housed in larger enclosures a thermostat should be set for overnight temperatures no lower than 22°C
- Temperatures should be checked daily for max and min readings
- Humidity is important with this species should be measured with a hygrometer and moderately high by spraying at regular intervals.

### **Lightening**

- Must be exposed to UVB/UVA light, however Red foots are a rainforest species they may not require such a potent UV-B source as other species
- 12 hours per day
- All UVB/UVA bulbs should be checked regularly for their UV output and should be changed following manufacturer guidelines this can be every 6 – 12 months depending on brand.
- It is also important to expose your tortoise to natural UV during the summer months and having an outer enclosure is essential for the long term health of your tortoise.

### **Companions**

- In general they are happier being solitary; adults can be maintained in single sex groups of up to five in suitable accommodation. Should breeding be required the males can be exposed to the females during the summer months.

### **Diet**

Hinge- back are omnivorous and their diet should consist of a wide variety of plant material although live food can be provided at least once a week

- Supplementation is important and is recommended to add in to their diets, mineral powder with high calcium is required. It is important to ensure the phosphorus content is low.
- Cuttlefish is often fed to tortoises and although it is to be encouraged it should not be relied upon as a calcium source.
- Water always available

### **Diets**

- Dandelions
- Clover
- Sow thistle
- Honey suckle
- Sedum
- Chick weed
- Dock leaves
- Plantain
- Parsley
- Watercress
- Fruits
- Salads
- Vegetables
- pinkies
- mealworms
- crickets
- chicken

### **SALMONELLA**

- All reptiles can potentially carry Salmonella.
- However it is rarely a cause of illness in reptiles and treatment is not required.
- It can be transmitted to people (especially young children or those who are immunocompromised) so good hygiene after handling the reptile is important.
- Generally washing your hands in soap is sufficient. There are commercially available disinfectants that can be used as an alternative.

### **ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS**

- We recommend annual health checks every year for pet reptiles as medical problems are more easily treated if detected at an early stage
- as well as faecal checks every 6 months.

### **INSURANCE**

- We highly recommend that you take out a pet insurance policy. For a monthly fee your pet can receive the best treatment at an affordable cost. There is normally an excess to pay for each condition then after that costs are covered up to a set limit. Once you have the policy, please provide us with a copy of your insurance details.