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Indian Star Tortoise Care Sheet

Indian star Tortoises originate from semi-arid dry grasslands of Indian subcontinent. They can be easily recognised by the distinctive star pattern on their bumpy carapace. Star Tortoises are very sensitive to their environment conditions and so not recommended for novice tortoise owners. They DO NOT HIBERNATE.

Housing

- Ideally a floor pen or tortoise table with this particular species. As large an area as possible should be provided but as the size increases extra basking sites will need to be provided.
- 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 35-40 oc
- Cool end should be maintained at 25 oc
- 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 20 oc
- Temperatures should be checked daily for max and min readings
- Humidity should be measured with a hygrometer and kept low.

Lightening

- Must be exposed to UVB/UVA light
- 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

- Indian star Tortoises diet should consist of a mainly grasses and fibrous plant material, in captivity diet should consist of grasses and hay, with vegetation such as weeds making up the remainder of the diet
- 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
- Timothy Hay
- Clover
- Sow thistle
- Honey suckle
- Sedum
- Chick weed
- Dock leaves
- Plantain
- Fruits and pads of the prickly pear
- Vegetables should only be offered if these are not available but may cause diarrhoea.

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 immuno-compromised) 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.