



Alligator Snapping Turtle Care Sheet

Species name:

Macrolemys temminckii

Adult size:

80-100 cm

Lifespan:

50+ Years

Breeding age:

11-13 Years



The alligator snapping turtle is a large, freshwater species native to rivers and lakes in the southeastern United States. Known for its powerful jaws and prehistoric appearance, it has a rough, spiked shell and can weigh up to 200 pounds. It is the largest freshwater turtle in North America. Its mouth features a worm-like lure used to attract prey such as fish and amphibians. Unlike more active hunters, alligator snapping turtles often lie motionless, ambushing prey. They are long-lived and can survive for 50-100 years in captivity.

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Housing:

Enclosure: Alligator Snapping Turtles are semi-aquatic reptiles meaning they require deep water to swim around in and a dry basking area where they can rest and dry themselves off. They will very rarely use their land area, but it is still important to give them the option to have one. While young a large aquarium with good filtration will be suitable however, they are fast growers and so something custom made will likely be required.

Substrate: Adding a Substrate to your aquarium is purely aesthetic, for ease of maintenance a plain bottom is better. Substrates such as large pebbles, or fine sand will mimic the turtles natural habitat.

Temperature:

Alligator Snapping Turtles require a basking spot where they can completely dry themselves off and warm up. This spot should be between 30-32°C. The ambient temperature outside the water should be around 25°C with the temperature dropping down at night to 18-22°C.

The turtles require heated water, standard tropical temperatures around 24-26°C.

Lighting:

Your Turtle will require access to UVB lighting 10-12 hours a day to ensure their shell stays strong and it also allows them to metabolise essential nutrients. Ensure you are using a 10-12% UVB bulb and replacing it every 6- 8 months.

Feeding:

Diet: These are omnivores, You should offer them a mix of leafy greens in addition to commercial turtle pellets. Frozen prawns and fish can also be fed.

Feeding Schedule: Feed juveniles every day, older individuals can be fed every 2-3 days.



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Enrichment:

Enrichment: Provide rocks, caves, and artificial plants in your aquarium as enrichment.

It is vital you provide your turtle with a land area which is completely dry to prevent shell rot and allow them to thermoregulate.

Health Care:

Health Checks: Regularly observe your Turtle to see if you notice any changes in behaviour, appetite, or appearance. If something does not seem right seek professional advice promptly.

Hygiene: Keep the enclosure clean, removing waste and uneaten food regularly. Perform partial water changes weekly, removing 25% of the water and replacing it with fresh, dechlorinated tap water.

Quarantine: Quarantine new Turtles before introducing them to an existing aquarium to prevent the spread of disease.

Turtles make fascinating pets when provided with the right care. Always do thorough research and consult with a veterinarian for specific advice based on your animals' individual needs.