

CREATURE CARE SHEET

www.cheshirereptiles.co.uk



Leopard Tortoise

General Information

Native to the Savannahs of Africa from Sudan to the southern Cape.

Size:

Leopard tortoises are the fourth largest tortoises in the world and the second largest on Mainland Africa. They can reach carapace sizes of 60cm in length and weigh over 45 kg .

Most specimens usually only reach carapace lengths of 35-45cm and weigh 15-20kg . Male leopard tortoises are sometimes larger than females. Please keep this size in mind when purchasing or adopting a small juvenile or hatchling leopard tortoise because they will get larger and size is one of the reasons why these tortoises are offered for adoption.

Life span:

Like all of the larger tortoise species, the leopard tortoise can live to 100 years or more. Sexing (mature individuals), males have longer and thicker tails than females and have slightly concave plastrons.

Housing requirements:

Hatchling and juvenile leopard tortoises can be kept in vivariums or in mesh enclosures (such as Repteriums). As the tortoise gets larger a large custom built will be needed to adequately house this species. A pen size of about 10 feet by 10 feet in size for a medium sized leopard tortoise. When temperatures allow, it is good for leopard tortoises to have an outdoor enclosure.

Temperature:

Leopard tortoises require daytime temperatures of 22-28C. Nighttime temperatures should be 22-24° C and should not drop below 16° C. Leopard tortoises should not be hibernated.

Heat/Light:

When possible leopard tortoises do best in outdoor enclosures where they can take advantage of natural UVB light and heat from the sun. During colder months they will need to be setup in an indoor enclosure with heat and UVB light. Newer mercury vapor bulbs can provide both heat and UVB light in a single bulb. Fluorescent UVB bulbs can also be used for light. Additional heat can be provided with ceramic emitters, daytime basking bulbs, infrared heat bulbs and even under-tank heat mats can be used.

Under no circumstances should a heat rock should be used as they can cause serious burns to your leopard tortoise.

Substrate:

If kept in an outdoor pen then normal grasses can be used in the pen. Indoor enclosures can use a variety of substrates such as aspen shavings, compressed paper products, newspaper or indoor/outdoor carpeting. Pine and cedar shavings should be avoided because they can cause long-term health issues.

Cheshire Waterlife & Falconry Centre
Tel: 01606 882223

CREATURE CARE SHEET

www.cheshirereptiles.co.uk

Environment:

Leopard tortoises come from a warmer and dryer part of the world and do not do well with high humidity or cooler temperatures. Because of this fact, leopard tortoises should never be hibernated.

Diet:

Leopard tortoises require a high fiber diet and should consist of 70% - 75% of grasses and hay. Use a variety of hays (timothy, alfalfa, orchard grass, etc.) to provide variety. Spinach, water cress and other green leafy salad type vegetables are often enjoyed as too are dandelion leaves and clover. Large amounts of lettuce and fruits should not be provided, though occasional small amounts are OK.

Meat and other high protein items should be avoided as they lead to long-term health issues. Calcium and vitamin D3 supplements should be provided on a regular basis (two to three times per week depending on the diet being fed). Care should be taken not to over-supplement as this can cause health issues as well.

Maintenance:

The enclosure should be spot cleaned daily. A thorough cleaning should be performed on a regular basis. A 5% bleach solution is an excellent disinfectant. Be sure to thoroughly rinse the enclosure before replacing the substrate and placing the tortoise back in the enclosure. It is always recommended to wash your hands thoroughly after handling the tortoise or cleaning the cage or cage accessories.