

***Chrysemys picta* - (Painted Turtle) Care** - Darrell Senneke
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Chrysemys picta marginata - Midland Painted Turtle
Chrysemys picta belli - Western Painted Turtle
Chrysemys picta dorsalis - Southern Painted Turtle
And intergrades



This care sheet is intended only to cover the general care of this species. Further research to best develop a maintenance plan for whichever species you are caring for is essential.

Many turtle lovers have fond memories from their childhood of canoeing down a lazy river or across a quiet lake and finding hatchling Painted turtles. These diminutive little turtles were the gems of any camping trip. Their bright eyes, yellow skin markings and beautifully patterned plastrons made them a treasure in every child's hand. While traditionally bringing home one of these turtles resulted in its death a few weeks or months later, present knowledge and technology makes it an easily maintained animal as long as a person is willing to provide some basic requirements. Couple the ability to properly care for them with the increased success that breeders are having and it is now possible to purchase these gems from captive born stock.

HOUSING PAINTED TURTLES

INDOORS - The most useful form of indoor accommodation for *Chrysemys* consists of an aquarium. For hatchlings I would suggest a water depth of 3 to 6 inches (7.5 to 15 cm) with one end built up with rocks to provide a dry basking spot. A reasonable size aquarium for a hatchling is a 20 gallon: 30 inches by 12 inches, (75 cm by 30 cm). As the animal grows the size of this habitat should be increased. All Painted turtles are excellent swimmers so water depth is not as critical a factor as they get older.. A depth of 10 inches up to 30 inches (20 cm to 60 cm) would be fine for turtles

between 4 inches (10 cm) and adult size which can reach 8 inches (20 cm)..

Chrysemys Picta - Painted Turtle

- **Location** - United States East of the Rocky mountains
- **Habitat** - Ponds, rivers,
- **Size** - 20 cm (8 inches)
- **Diet** - Omnivorous - leafy greens and invertebrates
- **Conservation Status** - Not listed
- **Threats** - habitat loss
- **Alternate Names** - Pinter turtle

Water quality is very important. Many problems with aquatic turtles can be averted if one spends a little time and money designing and purchasing an adequate filtration system for your pets. For adult Painted turtles we advise canister filters as they are easily cleaned and provide for excellent

water quality. Hatchlings are more difficult to provide good filtration for because of the depth of the water, for these a submersible foam filter or power filter and **frequent** water changes is the rule.

In one corner of the environment a hardware store reflector clip light lamp should be positioned to provide artificial basking facilities. This should be positioned to provide a basking spot of 90 degrees F or so (32 degrees C) in that section of the habitat. The habitat should also be equipped with a full spectrum fluorescent light to provide for UVB. A UVB source is necessary for Vitamin D3 syntheses (needed in calcium metabolism). If preferred to this lighting arrangement a Mercury vapor bulb may be used that fulfills all requirements. Live or plastic aquatic plants are suggested to provide a sense of security and hiding places.

OUTDOOR HOUSING - Predator proof outdoor habitats offer many advantages over indoor accommodations and should seriously be considered as an option during warm weather. A child's wading pool sunk into the ground in a secure enclosure makes for a serviceable outdoor habitat. Larger ponds with advanced filtration can be used to provide a spectacular outdoor home for your Painted turtle.

DIET. Be careful not to overfeed your *Chrysemys*. I recommend only feeding 2 to 3 times a week for adult turtles and every day or every other day for the rapidly growing hatchlings. Painted turtles will consume vegetables, greens such as mustard greens, turnip greens, dandelion, spinach, carrots, zucchini and any aquatic vegetation, i.e.. duckweed, water lettuce, water hyacinth, etc. They will also consume insects, worms and fish. Many of the commercially prepared turtle diets that exist on the market today are excellent supplemental Painted turtle food.

Additional calcium supplementation is essential. Powdered calcium can be sprinkled all foods. It is suggested that one use calcium supplemented with vitamin D3 if the animal is being maintained indoors and calcium without D3 if it is outdoors. Provision of a cuttlefish bone, which can be gnawed if desired, is also recommended.

These species hibernate in nature. After careful research of methods used to safely do this, hibernation facilities may be provided for the turtle.

It should be noted that turtle and tortoise care research is ongoing. As new information becomes available we share this on the World Chelonian Trust web site at www.chelonia.org. Serious keepers find it to be a benefit to have the support of others who keep these species. Care is discussed in our free online email community, which may be joined from the web address above. Please contact us about the many benefits of becoming a member of the World Chelonian Trust.

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