

Chinese Striped-neck turtle, (*Ocadia sinensis*) - Darrell Senneke

Syn: Golden Thread Turtle

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Taxonomic Journey: *

Emys sinensis GRAY 1834

Emys bennettii GRAY 1844

Emys sinensis - GÜNTHER 1864

Ocadia sinensis - GRAY 1870

Emys chinensis - GRAY 1870

Ocadia sinensis - BOULENGER 1889

Ocadia sinensis - STEJNEGER 1907

Ocadia sinensis - OBST 2003



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..

Considered by many to be the Asian equivalent of a *Pseudemys* species both in its eating habits and its hardiness, the beautiful Chinese Striped-neck or Golden Thread turtle is often overlooked as a possible addition to a collection. This is a shame as they are frequently available from breeders at a very reasonable price, especially considering that they are

Asian in origin. Found in slow moving streams and rivers as well as ponds in southern China and Vietnam as well as on the islands of Hainan and Taiwan, *Ocadia sinensis* is primarily a herbivore but will take some animal matter as well. Exceptionally large specimens may reach about 10 inches (25 cm) but adults are more normally seen at 8 - 9 inches (20 - 22 cm) . This species is found in sub-tropical to tropical climates and does not hibernate.

HOUSING *Ocadia sinensis*

INDOORS - The most useful form of indoor accommodation for Chinese Striped-neck turtles 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 Chinese Striped-neck turtles are excellent



swimmers so water depth is not 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.

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 Chinese Striped-neck turtles maintained indoors we advise canister filters and water changes to 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 used 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 both heat and UV 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 Chinese Striped-neck turtles.

DIET. Be careful not to overfeed your Chinese Striped-neck turtle. 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. Chinese Striped-neck 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. In addition to this they enjoy fruit as a part of the diet, pieces of apple, grapes, melon as well as bananas are accepted. They will also consume occasional insects and worms. Hatchlings appear to be somewhat more carnivorous than adults. Many of the commercially prepared turtle diets that exist on the market today are excellent supplemental Chinese Striped-neck 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.

MEDICAL: As this species is frequently bred in captivity, the problems associated with freshly imported Asian food market animals should not be encountered. As with all aquatic turtles vigilant care must be taken to watch for signs of respiratory distress as well as shell infections.

This species does not hibernate in nature. While a cool down period is utilized by some keepers to promote breeding activity, it is not advised that one subject them to a more extreme winter cool down than that in normally found in sub-tropical areas.

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.

References:

*The EMBL Reptile Database <http://www.embl-heidelberg.de/~uetz/LivingReptiles.html>

Chen, T. H., and K. Y. Lue. 1999. Food habits of the Chinese stripe-necked turtle, *Ocadia sinensis* (Testudines: Bataguridae), in the Keelung River, northern Taiwan. J. of Herpetology 33(3):463-471.

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