

# Common Mud Turtle Care Sheet

(*Kinosternon subrubrum*)

## Quick Facts

- **Size:** 3-5 inches.
- **Lifespan:** 30-50+ years with proper care.
- **Temperament:** Calm and solitary; can be shy but may grow accustomed to their keeper.
- **Activity Level:** Moderately active; enjoys burrowing and exploring both water and land areas.
- **Diet:** Omnivorous; prefers protein but also eats some vegetation.



## Overview:

The Common Mud Turtle is a small, hardy freshwater species found in slow-moving waters across the eastern United States. Known for their adaptability and manageable size, these turtles make excellent pets for keepers with limited space. They are less aquatic than many other turtles, spending significant time on land and in shallow water.

## Habitat Requirements

### Tank Setup

- **Tank Size:** Minimum of 20 gallons for one turtle; larger enclosures are better if keeping multiple turtles.
- **Water Depth:** 4-6 inches for juveniles; adults can handle deeper water (6-12 inches) but require easy access to the surface.
- **Substrate:** Fine sand or smooth gravel for burrowing; include hiding spots like logs, caves, or plants.
- **Land Area:** Provide a sloped area or floating platform for basking and resting.

### Water Quality

- **Filtration:** A moderate-powered filter to keep the water clean without creating strong currents.
- **Temperature:** Maintain water between 75-80°F.
- **pH Level:** Neutral to slightly acidic (6.0-7.5).
- **Cleaning:** Perform regular water changes (25-50%) weekly to prevent ammonia buildup.

## Lighting and Heating

- **UVB Lighting:** Provide UVB light for 10-12 hours daily to support shell and bone health.
- **Basking Spot Temperature:** Keep at 85-90°F under a heat source.
- **Ambient Temperature:** Maintain 75-80°F during the day and 70-75°F at night.

## Diet and Feeding

- **Protein Sources:** Insects, worms, small fish, snails, and high-quality turtle pellets.
- **Vegetation:** Occasional offerings of leafy greens (dandelion greens, kale) and aquatic plants.
- **Fruits (Rare Treats):** Small pieces of berries or melon.
- **Feeding Frequency:** Juveniles eat daily; adults every other day.
- **Calcium Supplementation:** Dust food with calcium powder once or twice weekly.

## Handling and Behavior

- **Handling:** Handle sparingly, as they can become stressed. Mud turtles are more terrestrial than any species, so they tolerate short handling sessions better than fully aquatic turtles.
- **Behavior:** Mud Turtles are generally calm and enjoy burrowing in substrate or exploring their environment. They are less active swimmers and prefer shallow, still water.

## Health and Maintenance

- **Common Health Issues:** Shell rot, respiratory infections, and vitamin deficiencies.
- **Signs of Illness:** Lethargy, wheezing, swollen eyes, or changes in appetite. Consult a reptile veterinarian if symptoms occur.
- **Shell Maintenance:** Provide UVB lighting and a balanced diet to support healthy shell growth.

## Fun Facts

1. Common Mud Turtles get their name from their natural habitat, which often includes muddy or marshy areas.
2. They can emit a musky odor as a defense mechanism when threatened.
3. Their small size and relatively simple care requirements make them a great choice for beginner turtle keepers.

**By meeting these care requirements, your Common Mud Turtle can live a long and healthy life, providing enjoyment for decades!**