

Map Turtle Sneezing

My map turtle is sneezing and breathing through its mouth.

By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, DABVP

False map turtle by Bill Love.

I recently bought two map turtles – a yellow-bellied map turtle and a false map turtle. My false map turtle has been breathing through its mouth and sneezing every now and then. The other map turtle is OK. I'm not sure what to do about the false map turtle.

Thank you,
Brian

Sneezing is a sign of a respiratory infection afflicting your map turtle, although it can also be related to vitamin A deficiency (hypovitaminosis A).

If your map turtle is mouth-breathing, stretching its neck out to breathe or gaping its mouth, those are all signs of a respiratory infection. Some turtles with a respiratory infection may pump their heads and legs obviously or show other signs of labored breathing.

Another sign of respiratory infection in map turtles is if they float unevenly in the water. If a map turtle lists to one side, that is a serious sign of infection in the lung and/or air sacs.

It doesn't matter that one of your map turtles is acting fine; it sure sounds like the false map turtle is sick. I think what you are implying is that since the map turtles are kept in the same environment, they both should be in the same condition. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. The map turtles' immune systems may be reacting differently to their diet and environment. Parasites, bacteria, fungi and protozoa may impact each map turtle in a different way.

Please find a qualified herp veterinarian and take your map turtle in for evaluation and treatment. If your map turtle has a respiratory infection, it isn't likely to resolve without intervention by a veterinary professional. So, please find a herp veterinarian who can help you with your map turtle.

Need a Herp Vet?

If you are looking for a herp-knowledgeable veterinarian in your area, a good place to start is by checking the list of members on the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarian (ARAV) website at www.arav.com. Look for DVMs who appear to maintain actual veterinary offices that you could contact.

Or, check out the state by state ReptileChannel Vet Listings.