

Mud and Musk Turtles

Mud and Musk Turtle species profile.

Mud and musk turtles (of the Kinosternidae family) are easily kept. Although mud and musks are easily maintained in a shallow water terrarium, either with or without haulout areas, they do have drawbacks. If collected in the wild, these specimens are apt to have short tempers, which in combination with their strong jaws, can prove painful to any unwary handler.

Adequate space is important for mud and musk turtles. One or two small, semiaquatic turtles could properly live in at least a 40 gallon breeder size tank, but more space is always preferable. Cleanliness is essential for the health of turtles. Enclosures should be cleaned frequently. Some species may be kept outside (year-round or during the summer, depending upon the climate). For haulout areas, a few limb sections wedged into place and protruding well above the water in the center of the tank are ideal in most cases.

Warmth--especially in the form of a basking area--is very important for mud and musk turtles. Most turtles enjoy basking temperatures ranging from 84 to 94 degrees Fahrenheit. Water temperatures between 72 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit are fine. Vitamin D and calcium supplements, used in conjunction with full-spectrum lighting, will give turtles a better chance at good health.