

# MUD TURTLE

(*Kinosternon subrubrum*)

# ZILLA®

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## FAST FACTS

- Found along the eastern United States
- Can live for up to 50 years
- Average size of 3-4 inches
- Semi-terrestrial; live both on land and in water
- Rarely bask, prefer burying into mud
- Occasionally grouchy

## MUD-LOVING, COMPACT COMPANIONS

The eastern mud turtle is a unique turtle that has become a popular pet thanks to their small, compact size. They rarely grow over 5 inches long, making them one of the smallest aquatic turtles.

Named for their love of burrowing in mud, they often bury themselves in wet leaves or loam in captivity. These strange little creatures can occasionally get grouchy, so are typically recommended for owners with some experience in reptile habitats. Like other turtles, they have a long average lifespan and can live for up to 50 years. If you're looking for a quirky, compact companion for life, the eastern mud turtle might be the perfect pick.



## NATIVE HABITAT

The eastern mud turtle can be found in ponds all along the eastern United States. They are unique from most other aquatic turtles in that they are a semi-terrestrial turtle, meaning they live both on land and in water. They also rarely bask, preferring to walk, bury under leaves, or settle on the bottom of shallow ponds.



## FEEDING AND DIET

Mud turtles are omnivores with specific dietary needs. They primarily eat worms, fish, snails, and dark green leafy vegetables. Avoid iceberg or romaine lettuce. Offer a variety of items including aquatic turtle pellets like [Zilla® Turtle Sticks](#), as well as treats they'll love like [Zilla® River Shrimp](#) or [Turtle Chasers](#). Feed them one protein meal every other day and leafy greens daily. Provide [calcium supplements](#) regularly and consider a separate feeding area to manage messiness.

Check the [Zilla® Feeding Guide](#) for a list of appropriate food options.



## RECOMMENDED HOUSING AND ACCESSORIES

As a semi-terrestrial turtle, eastern mud turtles require both land and water habitats in their enclosure. You will want at least a 40-gallon tank for one turtle, 50-100 gallons for the typically larger females. The [Aqueon® Standard Glass Terrarium](#) is a great option that comes in multiple sizes

The habitat should be half land and half water. Water depth should be twice the length of the turtle. Consider adding a second tank for the land portion to keep things cleaner.

Make sure to use a strong filter like [Aqueon® Quietflow® Canister Filter](#) or multiple filters to maintain water quality. Water care products like [Zilla® Water Conditioner](#), [Zilla® Miracle Ball™](#), and [Zilla® PURE](#) can help significantly reduce time spent on upkeep.

Eastern mud turtles thrive in a well-maintained substrate. In the aquatic section of your enclosure, use gravel as a clean alternative to mud. The land section can ideally use wet leaves and loam as a substrate that will encourage their natural burrowing behavior. Avoid mud to discourage hibernation.



## TEMPERATURE AND LIGHTING

Aim to maintain your mud turtle's water temperature at 74-78°F and their ambient tank temperature between 78-82°F. Traditional reptile heat bulbs such as [Zilla® Incandescent Spot Bulbs](#) or [Zilla® Mini Halogen Bulbs](#) are great, as well as heat emitters like the [Zilla® Aquatic Reptile Heater](#) to help with consistent overall warmth.

UVA and UVB is a necessity for a healthy turtle. Indoor turtles require UVB lighting and supplemental heat lights for 10-12 hours a day. Make sure to provide access to UVA/UVB using any [Zilla® Fluorescent UVA/UVB bulb](#). These can be fitted to a corresponding fixture such as the [Zilla® Heat & UVB Basking Fixture](#). Remember to replace bulbs every 6 months.

For more information on UV lighting, read [Understanding UVA, UVB, and UVC Reptile Lighting](#).



## HANDLING

Over time you will build a special connection with your turtle during feeding and caring for them, and they will come to recognize you. However, while they make incredible pets, it is not advised to handle your eastern mud turtle more than necessary as they can become stressed when handled.



**BE SURE TO WASH YOUR HANDS  
AFTER HANDLING ANY REPTILES**

