

MISSISSIPPI MAP TURTLE

(*Graptemys pseudogeographica kohni*)

ZILLA
REP YOURSELF™



FAST FACTS

- Skittish and shy
- Live 30+ years on average
- Females grow to about 10 inches, males to 5
- Named for their “map-like” shells
- Have a strong bite and don’t like being handled
- Recommended for experienced keepers only

TOPOGRAPHIC TURTLES

The Mississippi map turtle is a shy creature that prefers deep water habitats where they can retreat and feel safe. They are social and friendly in a community of other turtles, but can be skittish around humans.

As a pet, they are best considered as “look only” turtles as they get easily startled and stressed. They are not fond of being handled and may bite if threatened. For those reasons, while they are beautiful pets, map turtles are recommended for experienced reptile keepers.



NATIVE HABITAT

There are 14 subspecies of map turtles. Map turtles get their name from the distinct patterns on their shells that resemble the ridges of a map. As expected, the Mississippi map turtle is native to the Mississippi River and its southern tributaries. Conservation efforts and regulations are currently in effect to protect map turtles in the wild.



FEEDING AND DIET

Map turtles are omnivorous eaters, enjoying aquatic turtle pellets, leafy greens, insects, crustaceans, and fish. Offer fresh vegetables and plants regularly, avoid fatty fish, and provide larger, high-protein food items.

There are a variety of treats made for turtles that will get them excited and give them something to swim after, like [Zilla® River Shrimp](#) or [Turtle Chasers](#). For complete nutrition in your aquatic turtle’s diet, give [Zilla® Turtle Sticks](#) a try!

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



RECOMMENDED HOUSING AND ACCESSORIES

Full-grown map turtles require plenty of swimming space and prefer a current in their tank. Typically a 75-gallon tank will do well for one male turtle; and a 125-gallon tank for one female. The [Aqueon® Standard Glass Terrarium](#) is a great aquarium that comes in multiple sizes depending on your turtle.

Use a strong and large water filter to maintain water quality and create a current in the water, like the [Aqueon® Quietflow® Canister Filter 400](#). Water care products like [Zilla® Water Conditioner](#), [Zilla® Miracle Ball](#), and [Zilla® PURE](#) help maintain safe and healthy water while significantly reducing time spent on upkeep.

Turtles need to bask in order to warm up and regulate their metabolism. Provide a dry basking area with accessories like the [Zilla® Freestanding Floating Basking Platform](#) or [Zilla® Basking Platform Ramp](#).



TEMPERATURE AND LIGHTING

Maintain water temperature around 85°F for optimal activity and appetite for your map turtle. Use bulbs like the [Zilla® Incandescent Spot Bulbs](#) or [Zilla® Mini Halogen Bulbs](#) to create healthy heat and lighting. You can also use heat emitters like the [Zilla® Aquatic Reptile Heater](#) to help with consistent overall water 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 on basking platforms using any [Zilla Fluorescent UVA/UVB bulb](#). Remember to replace bulbs every 6 months.

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



HANDLING

Overtime you will build a special connection with your turtle during feeding and caring for them. However, Mississippi map turtles can become stressed when handled and may bite when uncomfortable. They may become more accustomed to handling over time, but always handle them gently and deliberately and try to keep your fingers safely away from the head.



BE SURE TO WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER HANDLING ANY REPTILES

