

LIGHTING

Terrapins need daily exposure to full spectrum lighting (including UV-b light).

Various UV lamps are available (see separate handout on lighting for reptiles), but for tortoises a lamp with a high output (e.g. 10-12%) should be used to mimic the strong sunlight of their wild environment.

Lamps should be kept on for ~ 12 hours per day and at an appropriate distance from the terrapin as recommended by the manufacturer.

All lamps should be changed at least as frequently as manufacturer's instructions or checked regularly for their UV output.

WHAT TO FEED

Red-eared terrapins are naturally omnivorous, eating a variety of insects, fish and plant matter. In captivity therefore, animal matter should make up 70-80% of the diet, with the remaining 20-30% being green leafy vegetables or aquatic plants. Animal matter may include rehydrated low fat dried cat, dog or trout pellets, raw small fish, bloodworms, earthworms, and good quality proprietary foods. Fresh food should be provided daily to juveniles, and every 2-3 days to adults, ideally no more than can be consumed in 30-40 minutes.

Feeding in a separate tank will help keep the water clean, but frequent handling may stress some terrapins, so may not be appropriate in every case (see separate Terrapin feeding guide for more information).

Supplementation is important in captivity as diets can often become deficient in vitamins and minerals. We recommend alternating a calcium supplement (e.g. Calcidust) and a combined vitamin/mineral supplement (e.g. Nutrobal). Unfortunately in water, supplement quickly washes off so should ideally be dusted on those food items which are always consumed immediately.

COMPANIONS