



Baby Musk Turtle Care Guide

Presented by Custom Creatures Pet Shop

Basic Info

Species: *Sternotherus odoratus* (Common Musk Turtle or 'Stinkpot')

Lifespan: 30-50+ years

Adult Size: 3-5 inches

Temperament: Shy and aquatic - not for handling

Best for: Beginners and small-space aquatic turtle setups

Enclosure Setup

Tank Size:

- Babies: Minimum 10-20 gallon tank
- Adults: 30-40 gallon tank
- Water depth: 6-10 inches for babies (they are poor swimmers)

Temperature & Heating:

- Water temp: 75-80°F (use a submersible heater)
- Basking area: 85-90°F
- Ambient air temp: 75-80°F

Filtration & Water Quality:

- Low-flow filter recommended (they dislike strong currents)
- Perform 25-50% water changes weekly

- Use dechlorinated water

Lighting:

- UVB recommended but not absolutely required
- Basking light should be positioned over a dry dock
- Maintain a 12-hour day/night cycle

Basking Area:

- Provide a small dry dock, cork bark, or flat rock platform
- Easy access to dry off completely

Substrate (Optional):

- Bare bottom, smooth river stones, or sand
- Add driftwood or submerged hides for enrichment and security

Diet & Feeding

Feeding Frequency:

- Feed babies daily
- Adults every other day

Diet:

- High-quality aquatic turtle pellets
- Protein: bloodworms, brine shrimp, chopped fish, earthworms
- Greens (optional): duckweed, romaine, anacharis (if accepted)

Supplementation:

- Cuttlebone or calcium block in tank
- Dust live insects or chopped meats with calcium occasionally

Water & Hydration:

- All feeding and drinking occurs in water
- Keep water clean and warm to prevent infections

Handling & Behavior

Handling:

- Not recommended - musk turtles can bite and emit a musky odor
- Handle only when absolutely necessary

Behavior to Expect:

- Bottom dwellers, often hiding or slowly exploring
- Nocturnal tendencies - more active at night
- Will bask occasionally but prefers to stay in water

Supplies Checklist

- 10-20 gallon tank for babies (minimum)
- Submersible heater and thermometer
- Basking bulb and UVB light (optional)
- Basking dock or cork bark platform
- Low-flow filter system
- Water conditioner
- Turtle pellets, live/frozen protein, cuttlebone
- Smooth decor and hiding spots

Contact Us

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We're here to help!