



Baby Common Snapping Turtle Care Guide

Presented by Custom Creatures Pet Shop

Basic Info

Species: Chelydra serpentina (Common Snapping Turtle)

Lifespan: 30-50+ years (can live longer in captivity)

Adult Size: 12-18 inches, 20-35+ lbs

Temperament: Aggressive if provoked - best for observation only

Best for: Experienced reptile keepers due to size, strength, and attitude

Enclosure Setup

Tank Size:

- Babies: 20-40 gallon tank minimum
- Adults: 100+ gallon tank or custom pond setup
- Water depth: 2-3x shell length with easy access to surface

Temperature & Heating:

- Water temp: 76-80°F (use submersible heater)
- Basking area: 88-92°F
- Ambient air: 75-80°F

Filtration & Water Quality:

- High-output filter (canister or pond filter recommended)
- Perform weekly 25-50% water changes

- Use dechlorinated water

Lighting:

- UVB is beneficial but not absolutely required (T5 HO 5.0-10.0)
- Provide basking light on dock/platform
- 12-hour light/dark cycle recommended

Basking Area:

- Floating dock or rock ramp is sufficient
- Ensure stability and ease of climbing

Substrate (Optional):

- Bare bottom is easiest to clean
- Smooth river stones or sand are optional (do not use gravel)
- Include driftwood or submerged hides

Diet & Feeding

Feeding Frequency:

- Babies: Feed daily
- Adults: Every other day

Diet:

- Commercial turtle pellets
- Protein: chopped fish, shrimp, earthworms, insects
- Occasional leafy greens (romaine, dandelion)
- May eat snails, feeder fish (use with caution)

Supplementation:

- Cuttlebone or calcium block in tank
- Dust insects or meat with calcium 1-2x/week

Water & Hydration:

- Turtles drink and eat in water
- Clean water is essential to prevent shell rot and infections

Handling & Behavior

Handling:

- Not recommended - snapping turtles can bite with extreme force
- Always use tongs, gloves, or a container if relocation is necessary
- Do not pick up by the tail

Behavior to Expect:

- Bottom-dwelling and ambush-oriented
- Active, strong swimmers and powerful diggers
- Will display defensive postures if provoked

Supplies Checklist

- 20-40 gallon tank for hatchlings
- Submersible heater and digital thermometer
- UVB and basking bulbs (optional but helpful)
- High-powered filtration system
- Floating dock or ramp
- Turtle pellets, fish, and insects
- Cuttlebone or calcium block
- Water conditioner and water change supplies

Contact Us

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We're here to help!