

Gopher Tortoise

Species of turtle.
Native to Southeast US.
Adult Size:

6 to 16 inches.

Weight:

4 to 13 pounds.

Top shell: Carapace.

Bottom shell: Plastron.

Connected at sides for protection.

Sections of shell called scutes.



Gopher Tortoise

Terrestrial.

Live underground in
burrows up to
50 feet long.

Dig with front feet.

"Keystone species" because they share
their burrow with 360 other species.

Herbivorous.

Especially grass, mushrooms, and
berries.



Gopher Tortoise

Lay eggs.

Incubate 100 days.

Sex depends on heat
of sand in the nest.

– F if > 30 degrees C.

– M if < 30 degrees C.

Most eggs eaten by predators.

Only 6% survive.

Normal lifespan 40 years.

Some much longer.



	Tortoise	Turtle
Habitat	Land based. Prefer high, dry, sandy places. Also pine flatwoods, dry prairies.	Aquatic based. Live in and near water. Ocean or freshwater.
Shells	Domed or rounded, heavy shell. Protection from predators.	Thin, flat, lightweight shell. Streamlining helps them swim.
Legs	Thick, club-like. Easier to get around on land. Front legs like a shovel to dig burrow in sandy soil.	Webbed feet with long claws. Flipper-like forelegs. Helps them swim and latch onto objects getting out of water.
Food	Herbivores. Eat grasses, leaves, plants, flowers.	Omnivores. Eat fish, jellyfish, insects, worms, and plants.
Living	Underground burrows – tunnels up to 40 ft long.	In and near water.
Nesting	Hatchlings move into burrow soon after birth.	Hatchlings remain in nest 90-120 days.



























