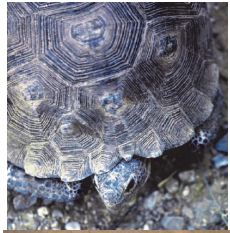


September 2009



▶ A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TORTOISE



▶ PET SHOP TURTLES: THINK BEFORE YOU BUY



▶ THE SEA TURTLE



Humane Education

Kokomo Humane Society Mission
Improving the lives of and preventing cruelty to domestic and companion animals through humane education, shelter, and uniting pets with families.

It's time to make living ethically, sustainably, and peaceably on this planet the very purpose of education.

www.humaneeducation.org

On Being Slow: A Day in the Life of a Tortoise

To commemorate my pet tortoise's 7th birthday, this entire edition is about our special shelled friends. Let's give them the recognition they deserve!

The sun is shining, so I suppose it is time to wake up. I have a habitat perfectly suited to my needs, and it stays warm year round since my species doesn't hibernate. I have water to lay in, another water bowl to drink from, and a food bowl which is my favorite. I get a normal diet of tortoise food, sure, but occasionally, I get some special treats. Kale, lettuce, carrots and other veggies-but today is a special day. Today, I get my absolute favorite; fresh strawberries from the garden! I eat pretty slow, but I finish the entire snack and go about my day sunning myself and exploring my habitat. When I get bigger, I know my human will build me an even bigger habitat. Sometimes I get to go out-

side to walk through the grass. I love being outside for awhile, but I am happy when I get to go back home. I don't know where to find water outside so I get very thirsty. My life is a slow one, but I am happy because I know I am cared for!

If you decide on a pet tortoise too, do your research. Make a promise to your pet that you will feed them, make sure they are healthy, clean their habitat and provide special treats often. Also, remember that tortoises get BIG and live a LONG time. This is part of the responsibility of ownership, and often it is a lifetime commitment. Taking them to a zoo or turning them lose is unacceptable, because they will struggle to adjust and often will not be able to fend for themselves. If you are a responsible tortoise owner, you understand that you are in this for the long haul!



Kurma,
the author's Grenada Red Footed Tortoise

Turtle vs. Tortoise

Too often are these two confused! They are both reptiles, lay eggs and have scales. However, the different between a tortoise and a turtle is really about environment and habitat. A turtle lives in water and has webbed feet. A tortoise lives on land and has short, sturdy legs. A turtle's shell is mostly flat and streamlined, while a tortoise has a large, heavy domed shell.



Tortoise



Turtle



Turtles as a Pet

What you should know

Keeping a turtle as a pet can be a daunting task if you don't do your homework. Even the most common turtle, the Red-eared Slider, can be a tricky creature. However, if they are properly cared for, they do make excellent, interesting pets. Contrary to popular belief, turtles are NOT ideal pets for young children. They are not easy to care for, don't like to be handled and can harbor *Salmonella*, which can be transmitted if standard

hygiene is not practiced. In addition turtles can grow quite large (up to 12 inches) and can live for decades! Let's talk habitat. This has come a long way from a glass fishbowl. Nowadays a proper sized tank with an adequate filtration system is required for healthy pets. This should be a tank with adequate lighting that provides both UVA and UVB light. A good filtration system with enough water for the turtle to swim is a necessity, but there

should also be a place where the turtle can get out of the water and bask in the light. In addition, the temperature should be kept at a comfortable level. Turtles are omnivores, so they require both meat and veggies. Make sure you research the appropriate diet. Feeding in a separate space is recommended, since turtles are notorious for their messy eating habits. Remember, the key to keeping any pet healthy and happy is research!



The Sea Turtle

Sea turtles live in every ocean except the Arctic. They spend all of their time in water, coming ashore only to lay their eggs. They have an 80 year lifespan, but despite their longevity, sea turtles are slowing dying out. They are hunted for their shells and skin, and often become accidentally tangled in fishing nets. All species of sea turtle are listed as threatened or endangered. Sea turtles have played important roles in the ecosystem for centuries, and even make beaches safe for humans by eating jellyfish. Consider adopting a sea turtle today, and help save these beautiful, peaceful animals!
www.worldwildlife.org



We come to you!

School is back in session, and that means it is time

for Ben and me to come to your school! Call or email me today to schedule an interactive humane education lesson that can fit into any curriculum!

At the Kokomo Humane Society we are committed to preventing pet overpopulation and animal abandonment. This takes everyone's cooperation to educate our community! Reach me at 765-452-6224 ext. 3 or e.auth@kokomohumane.org

Many Thanks, Emily J. Auth,
Community Outreach Coordinator

For in the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.

-B. Dioum



713 North Elizabeth, Kokomo IN 46901
(765) 452-6224
Monday-Friday 12-6 Saturday 11-4
www.kokomohumane.org