

## WATER TURTLES

**HABITAT:** All water turtles are outside pets and should never kept in an aquarium. The ideal habitat for your pet is to duplicate the natural environment as closely as possible. They can grow very large when cared for properly and given plenty of space to swim and bask. It should be completely fenced to keep the turtles in and to protect them from predators such as dogs, cats, racoons and opossums. It should be at least 3 feet deep and a minamum of 4 x 6 in size for one or two turtles.

**FOOD:** Most turtles must be feed in water. They need the water to swallow food. Dry cat food, trout chow or koi food are excellent food choices. Fish, snail or earthworms may be added to their diet. Water hyacinths in the pond will provide additional food. Young turtles should be fed every day, older ones every other day or every third day. Always remove excess food when the turtles shows no further interest in eating.

**HIBERNATION:** If the pond is 3 feet or deeper they may be left in the pond during the winter to hibernate. They will go to the bottom and sleep. They will absorb the oxygen they need through their skin.

**ILLNESSES:** Many turtle ailments are a result of improper diet or lack of natural sunlight. All sick turtles and newly aquired turtles should be isolated for at least 3 month. During which time you should watch for signs of illness. Turtles are highly susceptible to resiratory illness caused by dirty water, abrupt temperature changes and improper diet. Gasping, runny or bubbly noses, listing to one side when floating, swollen eyes or ears are a sign of respiratory infection or illness. Contact your reptile veterinarian. Any injured turtle should be brought inside away from flies to avoid maggot infestation. Remember they must surface occassionally for air, be sure there is nothing in the pond that can trap them.

Turtle & Tortoise Rescue of Arroyo Grande, Inc.  
A 501(c)3 non-profit rescue  
Bob & Judy Thomas  
805-481-5222