

Eastern Painted Turtle Care Sheet

(*Chrysemys picta picta*)

Quick Facts

- **Size:** Males 4-7 inches; females 6-9 inches.
- **Lifespan:** 20-40 years with proper care.
- **Temperament:** Friendly and curious; often interact with keepers.
- **Activity Level:** Active swimmers and frequent baskers.
- **Diet:** Omnivorous; enjoys a mix of protein and vegetation.



Overview:

The Eastern Painted Turtle is a small to medium-sized freshwater turtle, known for its striking coloration and outgoing personality. These turtles are native to the eastern United States and are popular pets due to their vibrant red, yellow, and black markings. They are hardy and active, making them suitable for beginners and experienced keepers alike.

Habitat Requirements

Tank Setup

- **Tank Size:** Minimum of 40 gallons for one adult; 75+ gallons for multiple turtles.
- **Water Depth:** 8-12 inches for juveniles, deeper for adults (12-18 inches); ensure easy access to the surface.
- **Substrate:** Smooth river stones, sand, or bare-bottomed tanks for easy cleaning.
- **Basking Area:** Provide a stable dock, rocks, or driftwood for basking under heat.

Water Quality

- **Filtration:** A high-quality canister or submersible filter to maintain water cleanliness.
- **Temperature:** Water temperature should be 72-78°F for adults, 78-80°F for juveniles.
- **pH Level:** Neutral to slightly alkaline (6.5-7.5).
- **Cleaning:** Perform 25-50% water changes weekly to maintain excellent water quality.

Lighting and Heating

- **UVB Lighting:** Essential for shell and bone health; provide 10-12 hours daily with a UVB bulb.
- **Basking Spot Temperature:** Maintain 85-90°F under a heat lamp.
- **Ambient Temperature:** 75-80°F during the day, 70-75°F at night.



Diet and Feeding

- **Protein Sources:** Insects, earthworms, crickets, shrimp, and commercial turtle pellets.
- **Vegetation:** Dark, leafy greens (collard greens, dandelion greens, kale), aquatic plants (water lettuce or duckweed).
- **Fruits (Occasional Treats):** Small amounts of berries or melon.
- **Feeding Frequency:** Juveniles eat daily; adults eat every other day.
- **Calcium Supplementation:** Dust food with calcium powder once or twice weekly.

Handling and Behavior

- **Handling:** Handle only when necessary, as they can become stressed. Always support the body securely.
- **Behavior:** Eastern Painted Turtles are social and may beg for food. They love swimming, basking, and exploring their environment.

Health and Maintenance

- **Common Health Issues:** Shell rot, respiratory infections, and vitamin deficiencies.
- **Signs of Illness:** Wheezing, lethargy, swelling, or changes in eating habits. Consult a reptile veterinarian if symptoms occur.
- **Shell Maintenance:** UVB lighting and a varied diet are critical for healthy shell growth.

Fun Facts

1. Eastern Painted Turtles are one of the most brightly colored turtle species, with red and yellow markings on their shells and skin.
2. They are excellent swimmers and can often be seen gliding gracefully underwater.
3. Painted Turtles are named for their vibrant, “painted” appearance.

By following these care instructions, your Eastern Painted Turtle can thrive and become a lively, long-lasting companion!