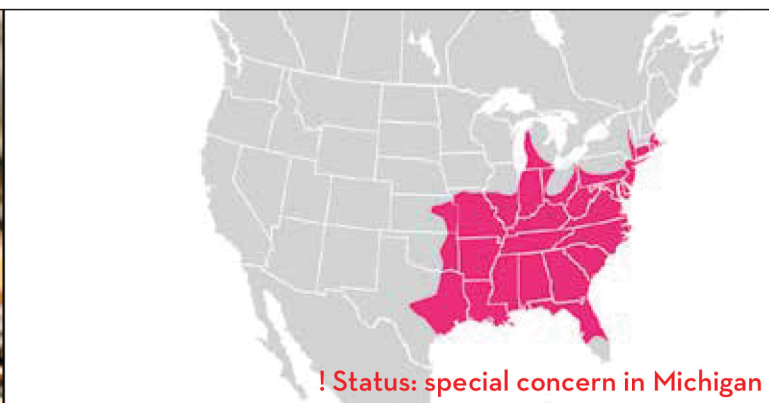
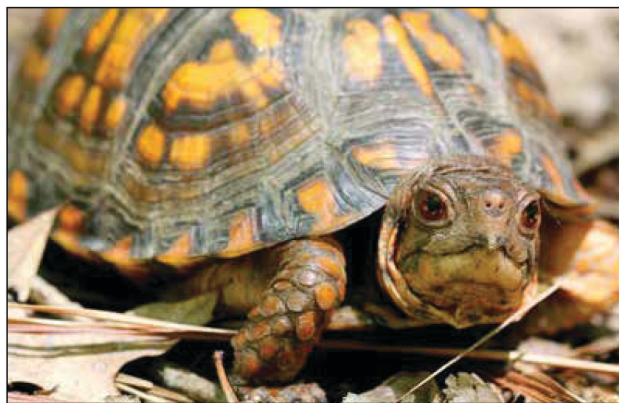


EASTERN BOX TURTLE

updated March 2017



Range	Strictly North American, this species is found Maine to Florida along the east coast, west to Michigan, Illinois, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas
Habitat	Open woodlands and adjacent meadows, thickets and gardens; often near shallow ponds, swamps or streams
Diet (wild)	Plants, berries, fungi, insects, worms, slugs, snails, and carrion; young are primarily carnivorous; adults tend to be mostly herbivorous (but don't eat green leaves)
Diet (captivity)	Romaine, spinach, fruit, monkey chow, bird of prey diet, boiled eggs, smelt, mealworms
Description	Length: 4½–8 inches. High-domed carapace is dark with a radiating pattern of yellow or orange. Have hinged plastron that allows it close its shell almost completely. Head and legs have yellow markings. Male usually has red eyes and red on front legs. The most reliable way to distinguish males from females is the plastron: males have a concave area centered beneath the hinge. Toes are slightly webbed.
Lifespan	Typical: 40 years. Captivity: Up to 138 years
Reproduction	The female lays 3–8 eggs in the ground in June and they hatch in 75–90 days depending on soil temperature. Nests that are 72–81° F (22–27° C) tend to be males, and those above 82° F (28° C) tend to be female (aka temperature dependent sex determination). Babies grow at a rate of about ½ inch (1½ centimeters) per year during the first five years, when they reach sexual maturity. Growth slows down considerably after that but has been reported to continue for over 20 years. Mating can occur spring through fall; females may remain fertile for four years after mating. Nests are started at twilight and usually finished by dawn.
Behavior	Michigan's only completely terrestrial turtle. Diurnal during warmer months, box turtles depend on sight rather than other senses. Population numbers are declining due to habitat loss, collecting for pets, and road mortality. Box turtles overwinter buried in up to 2 feet of leaves and soil. Home range is roughly 750 feet (230 meters) in diameter and frequent overlaps other box turtles, who are usually tolerated without antagonism.
Our animals	1 female (Polly). Captured from the wild in 1992
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box turtles are protected by Michigan law as a species of special concern. • When frightened, box turtles retract their head, tail, and limbs into their shell and clamp it shut. They wait in this position until the threat is gone. While juveniles have several predators, adults have very few due to this defense technique. • Box turtles are dangerous to eat, presumably due to the turtle having eaten poisonous mushrooms that don't hurt the turtle, but that retain their ability to poison humans. • The age of a growing box turtle in the wild can be roughly estimated by counting the growth rings on the scutes. However, by around age 15, the rings grow more closely together and accurate aging of turtles becomes very difficult. • If habitat conditions remain constant, a box turtle may spend its life in an area scarcely larger than a football field.

Phylum
ChordataClass
ReptiliaOrder
TestudinesFamily
EmyridaeGenus
Terrapenespecies
T. carolina carolina