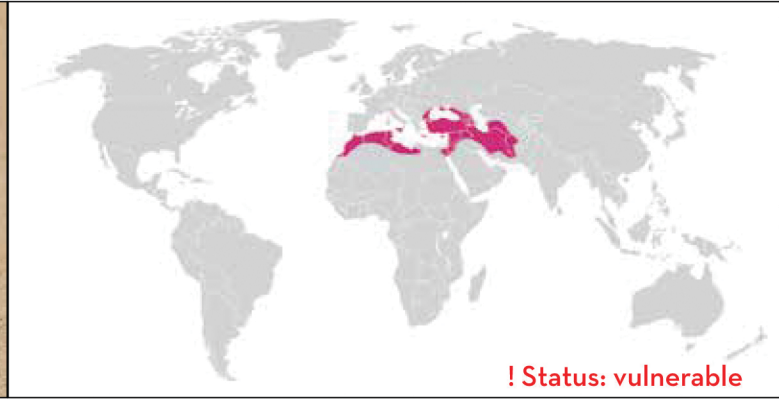


updated March 2017

## MEDITERRANEAN SPUR-THIGHED TORTOISE



<b>Range</b>	Eastern Europe
<b>Habitat</b>	Semi-arid scrub and Mediterranean forest. Prefer areas with large amounts of vegetation
<b>Diet (wild)</b>	Omnivorous, though it mainly feeds on plant matter, dark leafy greens/weeds such as mallows, dandelions and various legumes; will also eat insects such as slugs or grubs
<b>Diet (captivity)</b>	Hay, pelletized tortoise food, non-succulent greens such as kale
<b>Description</b>	Length: 7–8 inches. Females are slightly larger than males. Broad, oval, high-domed carapaces that are brown to yellow in color. Those living at higher elevations may be entirely black. They have growth rings on the scutes that are strongly marked with age. Skin color is golden to yellow-brown and very, very thick. They have large symmetrical markings on top of the head, large scales on the front legs, and spurs on each thigh.
<b>Lifespan</b>	75–100 years
<b>Reproduction</b>	Before laying eggs, the female will dig in the dirt and even taste it to decide on the proper spot to lay eggs. One or two days before egg laying, the female becomes aggressive and dominant. She takes on the aggressive characteristics of a male so she is not disturbed by other tortoises while laying her eggs. Mating begins after awaking from hibernation. The males will follow the females with great interest, encircling them, biting them in the limbs, ramming them, and trying to mount them. A successful mating will allow the female to lay eggs multiple times.
<b>Behavior</b>	Mediterranean spur-thighed tortoises are diurnal and are mostly active during the day. They spend their days grazing and retreat to burrows at night. They may not return to the same burrows every night; they will find one that is close by or they will make a new one.
<b>Our animals</b>	1 female, 2 undetermined. Born: 2003 and 2005; confiscated by the USFWS at Detroit Metropolitan Airport
<b>Cool stuff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spur-thighed tortoises, or Greek tortoises, are one of five sub-species of Mediterranean tortoise (<i>Testudo graeca</i>).</li> <li>• Spur-thighed tortoises are commonly traded as pets, despite the illegality of this trade.</li> <li>• Members of the tortoise family (Testudinidae) generally have one of the longest lifespans of any animal. Some individuals are known to have lived longer than 150 years. Timothy, a spur-thighed tortoise, lived to be about 165 years old. In spite of her name, Timothy was female (it was not properly known how to sex tortoises in the 19th century.) For 38 years, she was carried as a mascot aboard various ships in Britain's Royal Navy. In 1892, at age 53, she retired to the grounds of Powderham Castle in Devon. Up to the time of her death in 2004, she was believed to be the United Kingdom's oldest resident.</li> </ul>

Phylum  
ChordataClass  
ReptiliaOrder  
TestudinesFamily  
TestudinidaeGenus  
Testudospecies  
*T. graeca iberica*