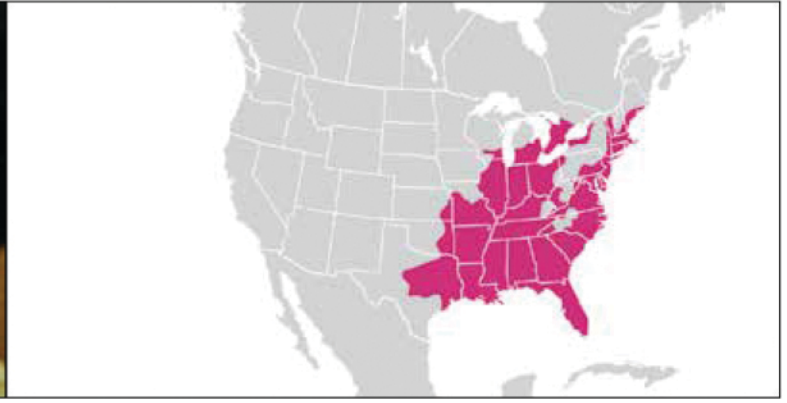


COMMON MUSK TURTLE

updated March 2017



Range	Native to southeastern Canada and much of the eastern United States, from southern Maine in the north, south through to Florida, and west to central Texas
Habitat	Primarily aquatic; spending most of the time in shallow, heavily vegetated waters or slow moving creeks or ponds
Diet (wild)	Carnivorous: consume a wide variety of aquatic invertebrates, including crayfish, clams, snails, and insects; will also eat fish and carrion
Diet (captivity)	
Description	Length: 3–5 inches. Black, gray, or brown with highly domed shells. Algae often grow on their carapaces. Skin is a dark-olive to black in color; there are two prominent yellow lines that run from the snout to the neck, one on either side of the eye. For both the male and female, there are barbels located on the chin and the underside of their rather long neck. The snout is pointed and the beak is sharp. Their plastron is small, offering little protection from predators. Their tongues are covered with papillae that allow them to respire underwater. Males can be distinguished from females by their significantly longer tails.
Lifespan	Captivity: over 50 years
Reproduction	The female lays 2–9 eggs in a shallow burrow or under shoreline debris. Eggs hatch in late summer or early fall. Hatchlings are less than one inch long. Breeding occurs in the spring.
Behavior	Musk turtles are almost entirely aquatic. They typically only go onto land to bask or when the female lays eggs. Sometimes they can be found basking on nearby fallen tree trunks or in the branches of trees overhanging the water.
Our animals	2 females, 1 male. Arrived at PPZ in 01/2006 (male); 01/2004, 01/2006 (females). Birthplace unknown (private donation)
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their common names (common musk turtle/stinkpot) are derived from the scent glands located under the rear of their shell. When disturbed, musk turtles will quickly release a foul-smelling liquid from their musk glands to deter predators. • Males are particularly aggressive and will not think twice about biting. • While foraging, musk turtles walk on the bottom of the stream or pond instead of swimming like other turtles. • In the United States, USDA regulations ban the sale of turtles under four inches long as pets. This technically excludes all musk turtles.

Phylum
ChordataClass
ReptiliaOrder
TestudinesFamily
KinosternidaeGenus
Sternotherusspecies
S. odoratus