

Eastern Spiny Softshelled Turtle

Scientific Name: *Apalone Spinifera Spinifera*

Class: Reptilia

Order: Testudines

Family: Trionychidae



The shell is leather with a marginal dark line on the carapace and tubercles on its anterior margin. The carapace is a wide oval, nearly as broad as it is long. Most of the carapace surface is roughened by small, sharp projections that give it a sandpaper-like surface. Coloration of the carapace is olive to grayish with numerous dark spots. The plastron is a uniform white or yellow in color. The lips are yellow and dark-spotted. The feet are mottled or streaked with yellow. Females are larger than males and the coloration of the sexes is also different. Males tend to keep juvenile markings of spots and lines. Juveniles are usually

paler in color than adults.

Range

Their range is the eastern half of the United States.

Habitat

They inhabit larger, slow-moving rivers; occasionally ponds, lakes or small streams, rarely leaving the vicinity of water.

Gestation

Incubation: 60 to 90 days.

Litter

Clutch: 10 to 25 eggs.

Behavior

Despite its being an almost totally aquatic species, this turtle is fond of emerging from the water and basking in the sun for hours, sometimes congregating in large numbers. The normal period of activity in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio appears to be from April to October. The winter dormant period is often passed under a shallow covering of sand.

Reproduction

Copulation has not been observed. Egg-laying occurs from June until the end of July. The nest is flask-shaped, ranging in depth from four to ten inches, with the greatest diameter from three to five inches, and with a narrow neck, about one and a half inches in diameter.

Wild Diet

Omnivorous, but prefers crayfish and other invertebrates, and some vegetation.

Zoo Diet

Chopped fish and meat, insect larvae.