



Ornate Box Turtle

Terrapene ornata ornata

Description: A land dwelling turtle that has a hard top shell (carapace) and bottom shell (plastron). The carapace is covered with colorful radiating yellow/orange lines.

Range: Great Plains Region from southern North Dakota to southern Texas.

Habitat: Short grass, sandy prairies, woodland, and meadows. Often use prairie dog tunnels for protection and warmth.

Life Span: Up to 50 years.

Natural Diet: They are omnivores and will eat a variety of native plants and invertebrates.

Zoo Diet: Chopped fruits and vegetables supplemented with worms, crickets, and occasionally small mice.

Behavior: When threatened a box turtle will withdraw the vulnerable portions of its body (legs, head, neck, and tail) completely inside their hard shell. The hinge on the plastron will close tightly to protect the box turtle from the sharp teeth, claws, or beaks.



Reproduction: Females will dig a shallow hole in which they will lay 2-8 eggs. The eggs will hatch approximately 2 months later. Parents provide no parental care.

Conservation:
Has not been assessed by the IUCN.

