

Cherry Head Tortoises

Chelonoidis carbonaria

Cherry head tortoises are a subspecies of Red Foot Tortoises. They are a very outgoing, and beautiful tropical tortoise originating from South America.

The genus *Chelonoidis Carbonaria* range includes most of Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guyana, Brazil, Bolivia, Amazon side of Peru, and some of the smaller islands located north of South America. All of these ranges produced a different typology of red foot. For instance, the Red Foots from Suriname and Guyana are quite large; adult males can reach an average of 15 inches. Whereas the Brazilian “Cherry Head” tortoises tend to average more around 8-9 inches with distinct cherry faces, marbled shells, and red legs and tails.

Remember, tortoises are a lifetime commitment. Their age expectancy is 85+ years old.

Housing

Hatchlings should be housed in some kind of tortoises table or tank that is at least 17”x12”. This gives you enough room to add decor, a water dish, and hides. As they grow, their body should continually only occupy 10% of their cage. For a full-grown adult, we highly suggest on having something at least 6’x2’ so that your tortoises has enough area to run around. And as adults, they do like deep-water dishes—BUT not deep enough to have to swim. Try and change waters daily.

Their ideal habitat should have at least 60% humidity. This humidity aids to proper scute growth (avoiding pyramiding), and soothes their sinuses. They can be found from grasslands to forests, but the level of humidity is relatively constant (sometimes a little more humid, but never much less). Ideal substrates; cyprus mulch, peat, mosses, or bark. Mixtures of these are highly recommended, and leaf litter is always mentioned. Since Red Foot’s need a great amount of humidity, keeping them clean is a must. At least spot-check the cage once a week, and if mold is found, let the cage dry out for a couple days.

Temperatures

All variations of Red Foot’s cannot handle cold.

Daytime Temperatures: They enjoy a basking spot of 95-100F. A spot that must fully encircle their back, or run the risk of burns.

Nighttime temperatures: Don’t let it drop below 70F at night. This can be achieved by adding a heating pad under the area where they sleep.

NOTE: Glass cages can leech heat from your cage and make it cooler than you would think.

UVB

This can be achieved by ZooMed Reptisun 10.0 T5-HO, Power-suns 100 watts, or Arcadia T5 D3+ 12% UVB. All UVB lights should be no closer to the basking area than 12 inches. I highly suggest placing these on a timer! 2 hours in the morning, and 2 hours in the evening.

Food

Protein:

20% of their diet is protein.

Earthworms, mice, mealworms, snails, and other slow-moving grubs. When feeding heavy proteins, be aware they will have a hard time digesting them when it is in the colder months. Even houses have a natural cooling effect in wintertime which will affect their little eco-system.

Vegetation:

This is the bulk of their diet ~60%

Dark leafy greens would include: Baby kale, dino kale, arugula, dandelion, endive, romaine, red and green leaf, and escarole. Change it up! Shredded Banana squash, Zucchini, yellow squash, or sunburst squash are also nice toppings to the "salad" and will add another variety. As adults, your cherry head will be able to eat these squashes un-shredded.

Fruits:

Too much fruit will cause diarrhea. Everything has to be in moderation. Any berries, bananas, pears, apples, mango's, whole papaya's, etc. We do NOT recommend any Citrus (i.e. oranges, lemons, limes)

Supplementation

Supplementation needs to be a Calcium (1.5% per serving) + Vitamin D3 (3,000 IU/KG)

Repashy Grassland Grazers, Zoo Med Repti Calcium *with* D3, Mazuri tortoise diet (soaked), Repashy Superveggies

For More Information, please visit our website :
<https://www.sunlandbreeders.com/care-sheets>