

Turtle, Striped Mud

Scientific Name: *Kinosternon baurii*

Class: Reptilia

Order: Testudines

Family: Kinosternidae



This small turtle does not exceed a carapace length of 4-3/4 inches. It has three long, light stripes on a smooth, keel less carapace. The color varies from a horn color to black and is often a reddish-brown. Stripes may become obscured with age. The plastron has two well-developed hinges and 11 scutes. The hinges allow the turtle to partially withdraw into its shell, but the closure is not as complete as in box turtles. Males have a spine-tipped tail and rough scale patches on the inside of the hind legs. It has musk glands on the sides of the body that it will empty when frightened.

Range

S. Georgia through the Florida Keys

Habitat

Cypress swamps, sloughs, ponds, drainage canals, wet meadows

Gestation

13 to 19 weeks

Litter

1 to 4 eggs

Behavior

This is the most terrestrial of the mud turtles, and is often seen crossing roads and visiting puddles after downpours. It is otherwise aquatic and crawls along the bottom. It is very adept at finding insect larvae that are crawling in the ooze at the bottom of ponds and creeks.

Reproduction

These turtles nest from September to June with the nests being dug in sand or decaying vegetation. The eggs are oval, and measure approximately 1" by .6". The hatchlings are just under an inch long, but grow quickly for a few years, then slow down for the rest of their life.

Wild Diet

Insects, snails, dead fish, algae, cabbage-palm seeds