

Common Name: Yellow-margined Box Turtle

Scientific Name: *Cuora flavomarginata*



IUCN Red list Status: Endangered
AZA Conservation Program: None

Class: Reptilia
Order: Chelonia
Family: Emydidae
Genus: Cuora

Habitat: This turtle is found in semiaquatic areas such as rice paddies, ponds and streams having lush overgrown vegetation. It is native to southern China, Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands.

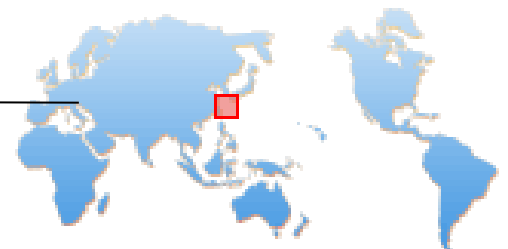
Threats in the wild: In the wild, eggs are preyed upon by snakes, cats, and large predatory birds. The turtle suffers from the degradation of their habitat due to land development and agriculture. Many of these turtle have been captured because they are very popular as pets.

They have also been sought out and harvested as food and traditional Chinese medicine. In traditional medicine, every part of the turtle is consumed, including their meat, as well as their skin, heads, eggs, shells and even their blood, urine, and bile. The eggs, blood and bile are all added to wine to provide particular cures, whereas the skin and head are eaten alone. The shell can either be ground into powder or boiled in water, and the urine is used as drops in the ear or consumed as a beverage.

These various concoctions are believed to cure coughs, prolapse of the rectum, deafness, cancer and everything in between. The wide variety of uses as well as the simple fact that they can be transported and kept alive for long periods of time post-capture has made turtles highly desirable ingredients for traditional medicine.

The importation and exportation of the Yellow-margined Box Turtle, as food or as pets, and the destruction of its habitat, has caused a decrease in the turtle's population, which is on the brink of extinction.

Physical Characteristics: This turtle gets its name from the distinct yellow markings on its high arched shell. The yellow coloration is present in a yellow stripe along the shell, which is otherwise predominantly dark brown. The shell is made up of bony plates, known as scutes, which become permanently marked with annular rings as the turtle ages. The underside of the shell, or plastron, is dark brown to black with a yellow border. The head and tail is a grey with a yellow stripe. They can grow up to a length of about seven inches.



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Reproduction: The yellow-margined box turtle lays a clutch of one to three white, oval-shaped eggs. The female covers the clutch in dirt and leaves for protection incubates the eggs for 68 to 72 days.

Longevity: Life span of 40-60 years.

Diet: They are omnivorous. In the wild they eat insects, fruits, and small animals such as rodents. At the zoo they are fed meal worms, specially formulated pelleted feed, and fruit.

Miscellaneous: The Yellow-margined Box Turtle spends most of its time on land, basking in the sun. Just like other turtles, Box Turtles retract their head, arms, and legs when sensing danger. But Box Turtles go a step further by folding their abdominal shell over their head and rear end, closing like box.

Docent Animal Specifics: Our Yellow-margined Box Turtle, **Drumstick**, is male and is around 30 years old.

