

## The Turtle Show –Teacher’s Guides

Children of all ages love turtles and we bring them to you. Students will learn the differences between each species of turtle and tortoise, where they live, what they eat and much more. Below you will find some general information about some of the Turtles and Tortoises that we will be bringing with us. We have also provided some additional links for Books and Websites that can be used as a follow up for additional in class discussions and projects. Student Activity sheets are also available on our website if you have not received them for follow up after the program. These activity sheets can found online at [www.fulleffectproductions.net](http://www.fulleffectproductions.net). Follow the links for “The Turtle Show”

### **Sulcata Tortoise:**

The Sulcata Tortoise is the world’s 3<sup>rd</sup> largest tortoise behind the Aldabra Giant Tortoise and Galapagos Giant Tortoise. They inhabit the southern edge of the Sahara desert, in northern Africa. Their diet provides them with water, but they don't drink it, they get all of the water they need from their food. They coat their skin with mud when available to cool off. When mud wallows are not available, they retreat to cooler burrows. Spurred tortoises are important to deserts because their burrows provide shelter for other animals. They do not hibernate, like many other types of tortoises, due to their natural environment being so close to the equator. They love to dig, and make very long burrows, often much damper than the ground surface, and other species frequently sublet, making dens in alcoves off the main burrow. Adults are usually 18 inches in shell length, and weigh 70 to 100 pounds. Specimens with 24 to 30 inch long shells weighing 150 pounds are not unknown. They grow from hatchling size (2-3 inches) very quickly, reaching 6-10 inches within the first few years of their lives. Several web sites list the record size between 230 lb and 240 lb.

### **Eastern Painted Turtle:**

The **Painted Turtle** (*Chrysemys picta*) is a reptile that is common in North America, and is an aquatic turtle related to other water turtles such as sliders and cooters. This turtle lives in ponds, lakes, marshes, and in slow-moving rivers that have soft, muddy bottoms. Its shell is used to protect it from its predators. The bottom of the Painted turtle's shell has a beautiful design that looks like it is painted. The Painted Turtle, when young, eats mostly carnivorously, dining on larvae, crickets, beetles and maggots. When it matures, it eats more omnivorously, with its primary diet including duckweed, water lilies and algal matter, as well as eating insects, worms, leeches, crayfish, tadpoles, frogs, snails and small fish. In the wild, this turtle may live for twenty to thirty years ; in captivity, it can live over twenty years. The painted turtle spends most of its time in the water, but often lies on floating logs in the sun, as well as on rocks or by the shore. During very cold weather, painted turtles hibernate, burying themselves for months in the mud beneath streams and ponds. The mud acts as an insulator and helps to keep the turtles from freezing in harsh winter months. Painted turtles can survive long winters in ice-covered ponds because they can live for several months without breathing oxygen with their lungs.

**Red-Footed Tortoise:**

Found in tropical South America the red-footed tortoise (*Geochelone carbonaria*) has a dark carapace with lighter patches of yellow in the centers of the scutes and around the outside edges of the shell. Although there is much variation, the legs and head are often colored with patches of red, orange or yellow. Adult males, at an average of 13 inches long, are somewhat larger than the females, which average 11 inches in length. The forest habitat provides the red-foot with an abundance of fallen fruits such as wild plum. It also eats wild mushrooms, vines, grasses, succulents and carrion, and is attracted to yellow and red flowers.

**Recommended Reading:**

The tortoise and the Hare –Grades **PK-3**

Hi, Harry by Martin Waddell- **PK-1**

Look out for Turtles – **Grades 2-3**

Frogs, Toads, & Turtles - **Grades 2-6**

Why Do Snakes Hiss? & Other Questions about Snakes, Lizards, and Turtles –**Grades 2-6**

Owen & Mezee The true story of a remarkable friendship – **Grades PK-6**

Turtles of the World – **Grades PK-6**

Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of New Jersey – **Grades 4-6**

**Recommended Websites:**

[www.chelonia.org](http://www.chelonia.org) – World Chelonia Trust –Dedicated to Conservation and Care of Turtles

[www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/slideshows/bogturtle/bogtrintro.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/slideshows/bogturtle/bogtrintro.htm) - NJ Bog Turtle Conservation

[www.turtles.org](http://www.turtles.org) –A page devoted to Marine Turtles

[www.tortoisetrust.org](http://www.tortoisetrust.org) – Educating the public about turtles and tortoises for over 20 years

[www.cccturtle.org](http://www.cccturtle.org) - Helping Sea Turtles Survive since 1959

[www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/prod\\_herpguide.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/prod_herpguide.htm) - Guide to NJ Reptiles & Amphibians