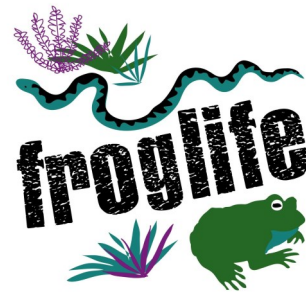


EUROPEAN POND TERRAPIN

(*Emys orbicularis*)



Identification:

- Adults 20-30 cm in length.
- Olive, brown or black in colour with yellow spots and streaks on the shell and skin.
- Some individuals nearly black without yellow markings.
- Iris may be red, brown, yellow or white.
- Similar in appearance to Red-Eared Terrapin but less likely to be encountered in the wild. Also lacks red flash behind eye and is darker in colour.



Distribution:

- Non-native species.
- Thought to have been found in the UK around 8000 years ago but subsequently became extinct due to climatic cooling.
- Individuals found in the wild in the UK are probably escapees from the pet trade.
- Wide distribution across Europe (except in the north and some central areas), north-west Africa, and western and central Asia.

Ecology:

- Found in ponds, lakes and slow moving rivers.
- Prefer water bodies with soft bottoms such as mud or sand.
- Bask during the day but will dive back into the water if disturbed.
- Hunts for fish, amphibians, aquatic invertebrates and aquatic plants.

Lifecycle:

- Hibernates during the winter.
- In spring females lay 3-18 eggs in small holes dug in sunny spots.
- Incubation period lasts 2-4 months but hot weather is required. (Reproduction in the wild in the UK is rarely successful due to colder climate.)

N.B. The release of exotic species into the wild is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.



INFORMATION
SHEET

Froglife is a UK wildlife charity committed to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles - working with people, enhancing lives together for a healthier planet. Find out more about our education projects and activities at www.froglife.org