



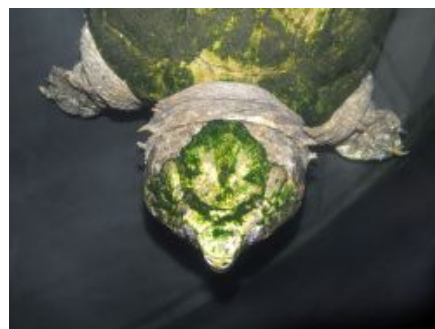
# Amazing Animals Fact sheets

## Tortoises and Turtles

Turtles and Tortoises are common name for reptiles that make up the order Chelonia, (also known as Testudines), recognized by a hard shell that encloses the internal organs of the body. Turtles are ancient life forms. The earliest fossils recognized as turtles date from the Triassic period, about 200 million years ago; thus, turtles were in existence prior to the emergence of the great dinosaur groups. Unlike dinosaurs, however, turtles have continued to adapt and flourish.

11 and 13 years of age. Mating season is between April and June and in this period, the females will lay clutches of between 8-50 eggs in a hole dug in the sand about 50 metres from shore. The eggs are incubated in the sand for 100-140 days before the hatchlings emerge. The hatchlings look very much like the adult Alligator Snapping Turtle and are left to fend for themselves.

### Australia Zoo Alligator Snapping Turtle profiles



### Alligator Snapping Turtle

The Alligator Snapping Turtle has three very distinctive ridges running along the length of its shell. Their shell can grow up to about 66 centimetres long and they can weigh up to 80 kilograms. They have an extremely long tail, which can be as long as their shell. They have a rather large head with sharp, beak like jaws.

#### Habitat

The Alligator Snapping Turtle is found in the southeastern United States. They will generally inhabit freshwater rivers, canals, lakes and swamps in the still water. Young hatchling turtles will live in smaller streams.

#### Diet

The Alligator Snapping Turtle is both a hunter and scavenger and will eat fish, frogs, snakes, snails, worms, clams, crayfish aquatic plants and even other turtles. This turtle has a unique method of catching its prey. It will sit motionless on the bottom of the waterway with its mouth open. They have a small, pink, worm-like lure on the bottom of their mouth which they wiggle to attract their prey. Once the prey item is close enough, The Alligator Snapping Turtle will grab it with its powerful jaws.

#### Breeding

Alligator Snapping Turtles reach sexual maturity between

### Lightning

Lightning is our largest Alligator Snapper and the father of our four sub-adults. He weighs over 60kg and gets his name 'Lightning' for a reason. He doesn't particularly like anyone intruding in on him in his pond and he will very quickly chase you out. On the other hand if you are bringing him some nice juicy fish it is a totally different story.

When Lightning eats he usually swallows the fish whole or slices them with his sharp lightning fast jaws. Lightning has lived here at the Zoo since 1985 and is very loved and respected. Alligator Snappers are native to the southeastern region of the United States of America so we are so we are extremely lucky to have Lightning with us.

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