

Terrestrial Turtle Troubleshooter

Use this troubleshooter to identify and record abnormal conditions.
If you suspect your turtle has medical issues, please seek the advice of a reptile veterinarian.

Date: _____ Turtle's Name _____

Do #1-3 before extensively handling the turtle because handling can influence these items.

	BODY PART	NORMAL (CIRCLE IF FOUND)	NOT NORMAL (CIRCLE IF FOUND)
1.	Breathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closed mouth breathing (not counting yawns and open-mouth threats!!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open mouth breathing (turtles normally breath through their nose, not their mouth) - Labored - Audible with wheeze / click / "wind in the rafters" sound
2.	Alertness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alert, bright 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Sleepy" / lethargic / dull
3.	Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Posture normal - Movement normal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lists to one side - Limp: FR, FL, HR, HL
4.	Legs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well fleshed - Skin intact (be sure to check high on legs where joins body) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skinny, very wrinkled - See # 6 below
5.	Feet / Toes / Claws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skin intact on top and bottom of feet - All toes present - Toe(s) missing but healed - Toes intact but claw(s) missing and healed - Claws proper length and shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open sores - Freshly torn toes or claws - Swollen feet - Swollen toes - Claws overgrown (curling unnaturally and in need of trim – (see "Beak and Claw Care" at boxturtlefacts.org)
6.	Skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intact (become familiar with normal skin /scale colors and textures, and normal skin folds / wrinkling in your turtle – take pictures!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dry, flaking skin - Bruises - Rash (Irritated red skin) - Open sores / scabs - Ticks or other ectoparasites, especially flesh fly eggs (look like very tiny rice kernels) / wiggly maggots - Swellings/lumps/bumps

	BODY PART	NORMAL (CIRCLE IF FOUND)	NOT NORMAL (CIRCLE IF FOUND)
7.	Tail and vent / cloaca (slit under tail where wastes are eliminated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tail intact or if truncated, tip healed - Vent clean - Skin intact, smooth, normal color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open, unhealed tail tip (tip freshly nipped off) - Vent dirty with mucus / loose stool (<i>collect same-day sample for vet to check for gut parasites – keep stool moist in air-tight baggie at room temperature</i>) - Vent irritated / tissue reddish - Vent swollen - Vent coated with many tiny white specs (flesh fly eggs) or wiggly flesh fly maggots (treat ASAP following instructions under “Tools” at boxturtlefacts.org) - Prolapse (see “When the End is in Sight” at boxturtlefacts.org (<i>a prolapse requires immediate medical care!</i>))
8.	Head / Throat / Neck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skin smooth, no lumps - Symmetrical shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lumps on one or both sides of head (see “Ear Infections in Chelonians” at boxturtlefacts.org) - Lumps on neck (may be internally tracked ear infection or other abscess) - Sloughing skin (top of head / nose)
9.	Nares (nasal openings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear and open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nare(s) plugged with mucus: R, L - Nare(s) crusty: R, L - Discharge; color _____ - Bubbling (a bubble or two is normal when a turtle raises its head from drinking, eating gooey food like a worm, snail, slug)
10.	Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear and bright - Both eyes spontaneously open wide when not sleeping - Both eyes have same iris size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Iris sizes are different - Cloudy: R, L - Discharge; color _____ - Crusty: R, L - Puffy / bulging: R, L - Won’t / can’t open: R, L - Sunken and shut: R, L
11.	Beak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normal shape and length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overgrown or malformed beak (may hinder eating and affect nutritional status and health)
12.	Mouth (<i>tap lightly on nose to encourage turtle to open its mouth</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear, moist but not tacky - Odor free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sores - Raised whitish/yellowish spots/streaks (“cottage cheese mouth” – indication of mouth infection) - Discharge (foam or fluid); color _____ - Odor - Tacky (may be dehydrated)

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13.	Carapace (top shell) <i>-wet turtle with "room temperature" water to remove debris that could hide defects</i>	- Without defects noted in next column	- Discolorations - Soft spots - Abrasions / pitting - Lifting and / or missing scutes – new this season (box turtles and tortoises do not normally shed scutes like water turtles) - Odor
14.	Plastron (bottom shell)	- Without defects noted in next column	- Discolorations - Soft spots - Abrasions / pitting - Missing scutes – new this season - Odor
15.	Weight (record below)	- Should feel heavy in the hand relative to size with <i>shallow</i> concavity between head and front legs, and in front of hindlegs	- Underweight: severe concavity between head and front legs, and around hindlegs - Overweight: bulges around legs



Good weight



Severely underweight

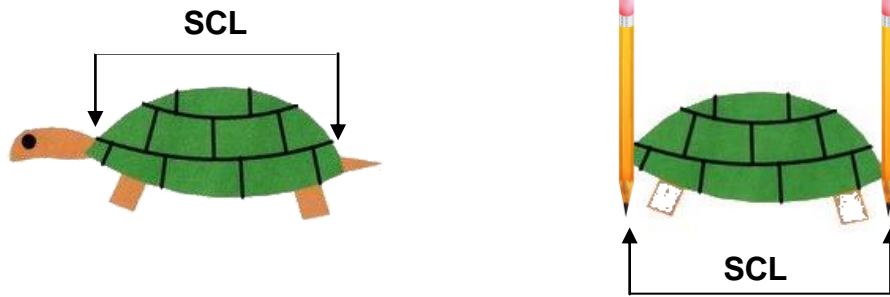


Overweight

Note: To limit the size of this document, many details regarding symptoms have been omitted.

Weight (in grams; 1 oz = 28.3 g): _____ (Note: medications are dosed based on weight in grams)

Straight Carapace Length (SCL) (in millimeters; 1 in = 25.4 mm): _____



If you do not have calipers to measure your turtle's length, place your turtle on a piece of paper and using a pencil held perpendicular to the paper, mark one end of the carapace on the paper and then make another mark for the other end along the centerline (mid-dorsal line). Measure the distance between the two lines.

Sketch identifying marks and abnormalities.

