

# Kansas Reptiles and Amphibian Laws

☛ Only species not listed as “threatened,” “endangered,” or “in need of conservation” may be collected. It is your responsibility to learn which species are protected.

☛ A current Kansas hunting license is required for collecting reptiles and amphibians, except the common snapping turtle, the soft-shelled turtle, and the bullfrog, which require a Kansas fishing license. People under the age of 16 need no license.

☛ The possession limit is 5 for all collectible species.

☛ In special cases, teachers, scientists, and others may apply for a scientific, education, or exhibition permit from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and may not need a hunting/fishing license to collect reptiles and amphibians.

☛ Prairie rattlesnakes may be collected commercially in Kansas with the proper permits. Contact the Department of Wildlife and Parks for more information.

Certain wild reptiles and amphibians should be kept only by experts because their needs are very difficult to provide in captivity. These include the following:

☛ young turtles - they need lots of vitamins and minerals for proper shell growth. Leave them in the wild;

☛ collared lizards - these lizards do not do well in captivity, for reasons which are poorly understood. Keep them only for a week or two at the most;

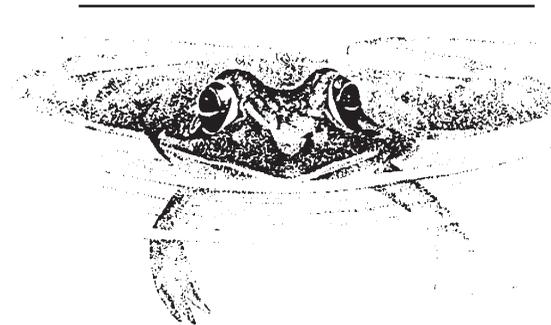
☛ narrowmouth toads - they feed almost exclusively on ants, which are difficult to provide in sufficient numbers;

☛ texas horned lizards - also feed almost entirely on ants; and

☛ venomous snakes - there is no reason to keep these animals in your home. They inflict a serious and potentially deadly bite. Although they are beautiful, they are best left in the wild and studied from a distance.

Remember, never try to keep an animal until you find out exactly what species it is and what its requirements for life are.

Keep wild reptiles and amphibians for only short periods of time because it is difficult to duplicate their wild habitats in captivity. It's best not to keep them through the winter. Release them at the same location you found them by mid-August to allow them to prepare for hibernation.



Wildlife professionals can help you find answers to your questions about reptiles and amphibians. Contact the Milford Nature Center at (785) 238-5323 or your local Department of Wildlife and Parks office.

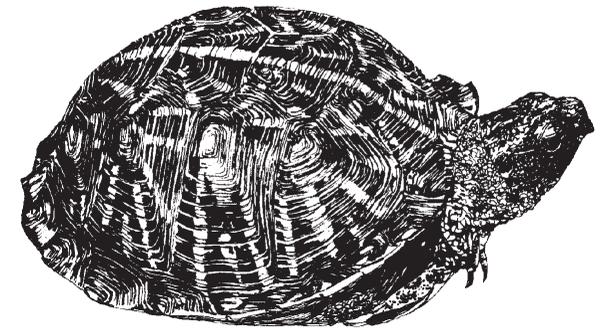


The  
Milford Nature  
Center

3115 Hatchery Dr. \* Junction City \* Kansas 66441 \* (785) 238-LEAF

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or handicap. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave. Suite 200, Topeka, KS 66612-1327 02/06

# Keeping Kansas Reptiles and Amphibians



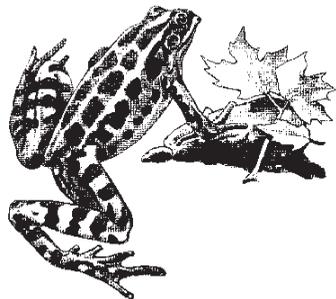
So, thinking of keeping that cute little box turtle you found crossing the road? It's not such a bad idea; you can learn a lot by keeping and observing wild reptiles and amphibians. But before you take them home, make sure you know what your responsibility is to the animal. Many reptiles and amphibians require special care in captivity. A trip to the library or a visit with a local wildlife professional may be necessary to learn how to keep the critter happy and healthy. Also, reptiles and amphibians in Kansas are protected by collection laws and limits. This brochure will make you aware of some basics, but make sure you understand the law and the animal's life requirements before you take it home.

# Basic Care of Wild Kansas Reptiles and Amphibians

No animal should be collected until you know what it is and how to properly care for it. Here are some guidelines, but a lot of reading or a visit with a wildlife professional will be necessary to fill in the details for individual species.

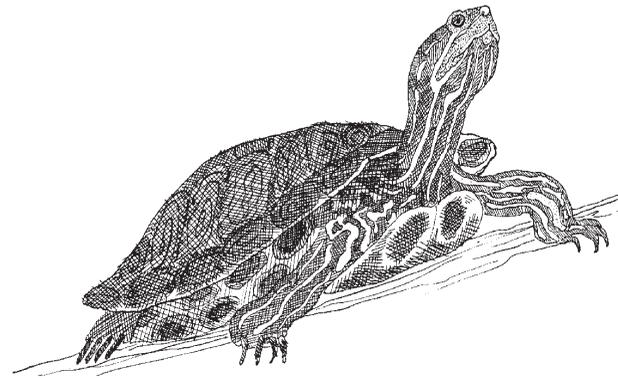
## Terrestrial Amphibians

Make sure the animal is kept in a container with high humidity and access to water. Aquariums with glass covers are good homes. Several layers of tape should be placed on two side of the cover to light it up a fraction and provide air circulation. Sphagnum and peat moss are a good substrate for these creatures. Potted plants, bark, branches, and rocks should be placed in the aquarium to providing hiding and climbing places. Native amphibians are best kept at 68-77 degrees. They should be fed earthworms or crickets once or twice a week. Mealworms are hard for them to digest and should not be fed. Amphibians should be handled as little as possible because their skins are easily damaged.



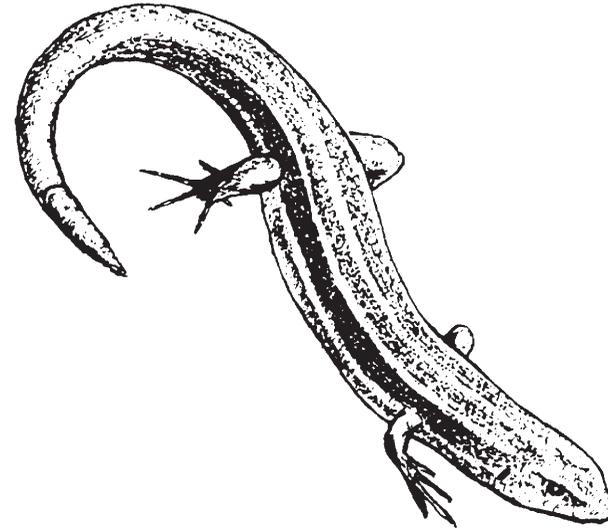
## Aquatic Turtles

Keep aquatic turtles in an aquarium with lots of room. Give them access to deep water and to a spot where they can remove themselves from the water to bask. The basking area should be under an incandescent reflector light with the temperature under the light 85-88 degrees. A varied diet is important and should include chopped whole fish, insects, earthworms, chopped whole mice, leaf lettuce, spinach, and commercial floating food sticks.



## Box Turtles

These are land turtles, and water should be provided only in a shallow dish. As with aquatic turtles, a varied diet is important. Try earthworms, crickets, mealworms, berries, diced melon, grapes, tomatoes, thawed frozen mixed vegetables, and salad greens (not iceberg lettuce, it is of poor nutritional value). Make sure the terrarium is large enough to provide room to move around and a hiding place.



## Lizards

A water bowl, hiding places, and a basking area should be provided for lizards. The cage must be large enough to provide a temperature gradient from one end of the cage to the other, allowing the lizard a choice of temperatures. This can be accomplished by placing an incandescent reflector light or a hot rock at one end of the cage. Lizards also need to receive full spectrum fluorescent light (Vitalite) to properly metabolize certain vitamins and minerals. Gravel or mulch are good substrates for most lizards. Lizards should be fed once or twice a week. The diet should consist of insects such as crickets, fruit flies, and occasionally mealworms, supplemented with a calcium powder from a pet store. Most lizards should be kept at 75-85 degrees.

## Snakes

Snakes should be kept like lizards. Only whole animals should be offered as food. A good rule of thumb is that a snake can swallow something three times the size of its head. The diet will vary depending on the species. Mice, young birds, lizards, frogs, fish, insects, and earthworms are all possible food items. Go to the library or ask a wildlife professional about the food habits of the species you wish to keep. When feeding, it is important to remove uneaten live animals from the cage because some animals, especially mice, have been know to bite snakes if left in the cage overnight. Most rodent-eating snakes can be induced to eat dead rodents in captivity, and this may be the safest way to feed them. Snakes should be fed once a week and most should be kept at 75-85 degrees.

