

# Hamilton's Pond Turtle

*Geoclemys hamiltoni*

Reptile

## Scientific Name

*Geoclemys hamiltoni*

## Other Names

Black-spotted Turtle, Black Pond Turtle, Hamilton's Terrapin, Spotted Pond Turtle

## Range

Indus and Ganges river drainages of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal

## Habitat

Forest ponds, oxbow lakes, marshy areas and rivers

## Description

A small turtle with white polka-dotted brown skin and striking orange to creamy yellow wedge shaped markings on the shell. The tail is short and all four feet have webbed toes. Males' underside (plastron) is concave while the females' is flat.

## Average Size

Length: 11- 15 in.  
Weight: 4 – 6 kg.

## Lifespan

In the wild: Unknown  
In captivity: Estimated at over 40 years

## Diet

In the wild: Snails, fish, amphibian larvae, mollusks and grasses  
In captivity: Worms, crickets and other invertebrates

## Incubation

50 – 60 days

## Sexual Maturity

6 – 8 years

## Clutch Size

18 – 30 eggs, twice per year

## Predators

Birds of prey, carnivores and humans

## Population Status

Vulnerable



## Behavior

These freshwater turtles are crepuscular (active primarily at dawn and dusk) and spend a good portion of their waking hours actively hunting for food. They inhabit clear, shallow, slow-moving waterways that are protected with ample aquatic vegetation.

During the winter, Hamilton's Pond Turtles can be difficult to see as they remain hidden under bushes, dry vegetation or water weeds. In the summer months, they reside mostly in the water, basking on rocks or logs, or floating with their heads exposed above the water. Like many turtles, they are fairly quiet, making only small creaking noises when retreating into their shells for protection.

## Reproduction and Breeding

In the wild, the breeding season begins in December. Males attract the attention of a nearby female by swimming vigorously around her, waiting for consent. Females will actively chase away and bite at males until they are receptive to mating.

This species of turtle generally lays two clutches, just a few months apart. The first clutch is laid between mid-December and mid-January and the second is laid in late February and early March, with the first clutch having more eggs than the second.

The female digs a shallow nest (only a few inches deep) hidden in bushy vegetation by herself before depositing her eggs and covering them with soil. The eggs hatch during the rainy season in May and June, with the hatchlings making their way to the waterway to begin their solitary lives.

## Conservation

Hamilton's Pond Turtles are protected under CITES Appendix I (Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species) where sale and trade is regulated or prevented. Despite this and their vulnerable listing by IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), they are still traded for food and shells in urban markets throughout Asia.

In addition, competition with humans is the most prominent issue in some fishing villages where these turtles are considered a predator of fish and are killed on sight. As with many species, loss of suitable habitat and competition for clean water are of utmost concern for the longevity of the Hamilton's Pond Turtle.



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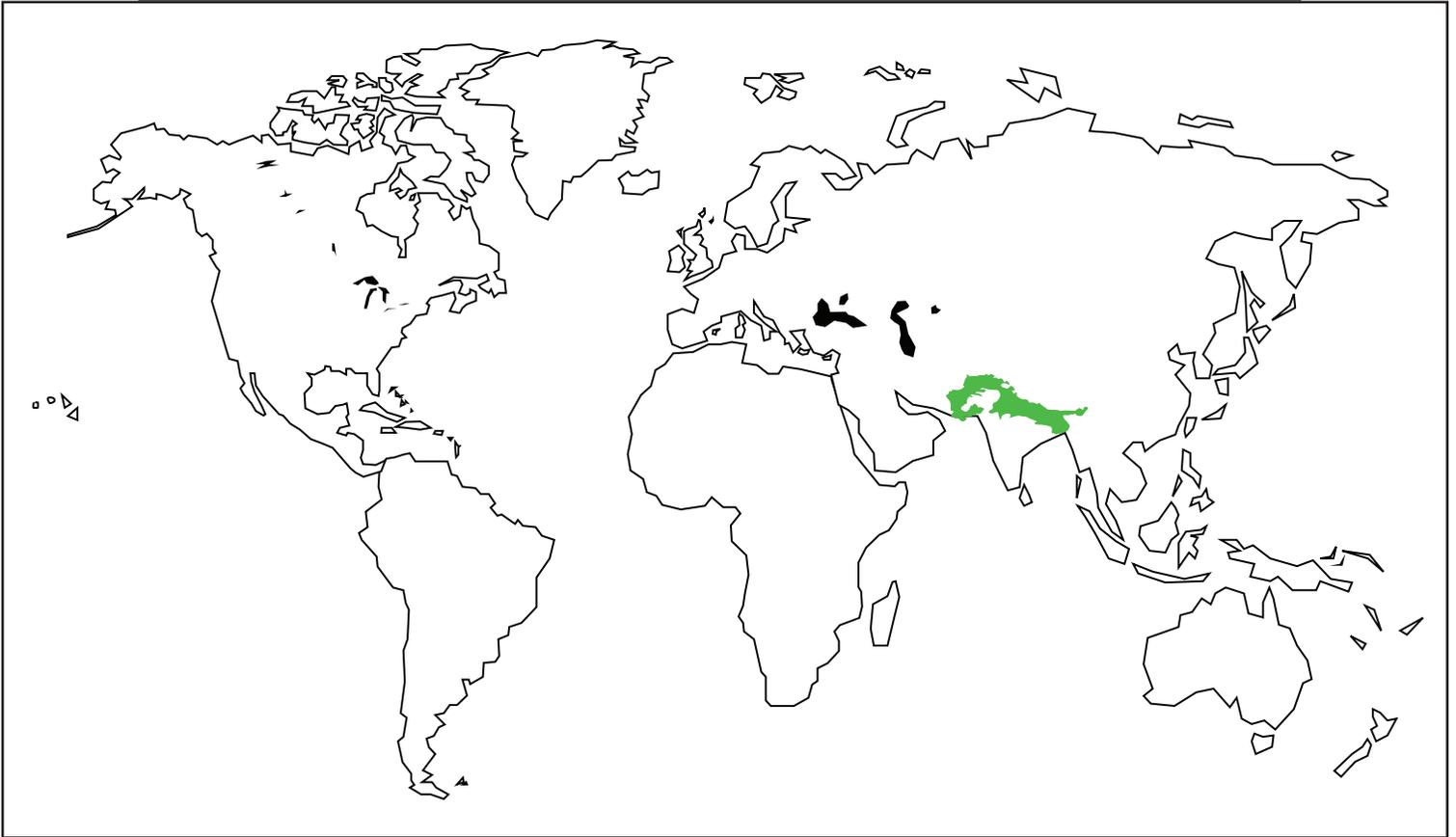
**Amazing Facts**

Females of this species can store sperm up to five years and then use it to produce healthy eggs.

Their strong jaws have rows of ridges that help crunch the exoskeletons of their invertebrate prey.

The underside of the male's shell is concave, while the female's is flat.

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