

## Black Breasted Leaf Turtle

(*Geoemyda spengleri*)

**Habitat and Distribution:** Higher altitude forests in Southern China, specifically the Hanian Islands through Vietnam. It is also thought that it might inhabit parts of Sumatra, Borneo, and the Philippines, however this has not been confirmed.

**Size:** Up to 4½ inches long

**Wild Diet:** Vegetation, slugs, insects and earthworms

**Predators:** Unknown

**Life Span:** 20+ years (captive life span)

**Reproduction:** These turtles lay leathery eggs. Most are laid between February and December. The average incubation time is 64-66 days.

**Behavior:** Black-breasted leaf turtles burrow under dirt, leaves and moss on the forest floor. This species seems to prefer cool temperatures and low light levels. They are primarily terrestrial, but will enter water to drink, soak and defecate. As a consequence, they are often found at the waters edge. Both males and females are territorial. When eating, movement of the prey item is an important trigger.

**Conservation Connection:** These turtles are currently listed as CITES Appendix III, meaning that international trade is allowed only on presentation of the appropriate permits or certificates. They are threatened by increased use in the food industry and their increased popularity in the pet trade. They have been designated as a priority in the Chelonian Taxon Advisory Group and are currently a recommended species for zoo breeding programs.

**Interesting Facts:** Also known as the Vietnamese leaf turtle, Chinese leaf turtle, Vietnamese wood turtle or Spengler's turtle. Females have a yellow or cream stripe on each side of their head and both sexes can have light colored speckling. Their feet are partially webbed and their eyes are very large with white irises. They also have an unhinged plastron; which means that they are unable to close their shell tightly.

