

HINGE – BACK TORTOISE

Phylum: Chordata, Class: Reptilia, Order: Testudines, Suborder: Cryptodira, Family: Testudinidae
Kinixys Homeana Belliana

In chelonians, many families have developed a hinged carapace (top shell), which afford greater protection to the vulnerable limbs and body of the turtle. However, the genus *Kinixys* comes from the fusion of tow Greek works: *kineo* (to move) and *ixus* (back or waist); together they mean ‘movable back’.

Size: the carapace can reach 8” long.

Habitat: Forested areas

Range: West Africa from Liberia and Ivory Coast eastward to Zaire

Status: Not listed as endangered; however they are being exported out of their native areas in large numbers because of their unique shells.

Diet in the Wild: Greens, snails, insects such as millipedes and beetles.

Behavior: They are relatively active; will burrow in the ground or excavate hollows for a resting site; enjoys shade and some sun; soaks in water holes as they prefer a somewhat humid, moist environment. Their health will suffer if kept too dry.

Special Features:

- The *Kinixys* are the only living tortoises in which the carapace contains a movable hinge.
- The hinges allow the back of the shell to clamp down so the back legs and tail have increased protection from predators.
- They can retract their head quite far when threatened, bringing its front legs in to seal the anterior opening in the carapace; the knees meet in front of the head with the feet pointing to either side. The enlarged scales of the forelegs face outward in this position, protecting the legs themselves.
- The toes are unwebbed. Limbs are developed for walking on land and for digging.

Breeding and Caring for young:

- Males are territorial and will battle other intruding males especially during breeding season.
- Normal clutch is two to four oval eggs; with multiple clutches produced in a breeding season.
- Newborns are 1.5 to 2” long.

