

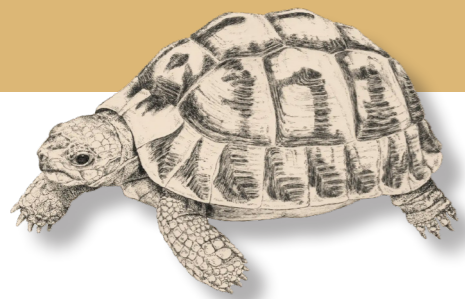
HERMANN'S TORTOISE

SCIENTIFIC NAME: **Testudo hermanni**

CONSERVATION STATUS: **Near Threatened**

FACT FILE

- CLASS: REPTILIA
- ORDER: TESTUDINES
- FAMILY: TESTUDINIDAE
- SIZE: 15-18 CM
- WEIGHT: 3 – 4 KG
- LIFESPAN: 40-60 YEARS
- INCUBATION: 97 DAYS
- NUMBER OF EGGS: 2-3, 1 TO 3 CLUTCHES
- DIET: CONSIDERED HERBIVOROUS, BUT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO BE CARNIVOROUS



Behaviour and Habitat:

As reptiles, tortoises need to regulate their body temperature. They shuttle between shady and sunny patches to achieve this. They therefore occupy areas that contain both densely vegetated areas where they can rest and hide from predators, and open areas where they can feed and bask. Their preferred habitat is Mediterranean oak forest, though they are commonly found in maquis or garigue habitat on hillsides and vineyards, or in dune scrubs or maritime grassland.

Tortoises evolved more than 200 million years ago. They have survived throughout that period due to their ability to adapt to different environments. Will that continue though, as they struggle to survive their main enemy: man?

Hermann's are a small to medium sized tortoise with a carapace length that rarely exceeds 20cm. It differs from Greek Tortoises in that it lacks spurs on its thighs and has a large scale on the tip of the tail. Colour varies from yellow-orange to grey, with bold black markings.



ID Feature:
Split rear cells above the tail

The only wild Tortoise found in France

These amazing creatures are now surviving in isolated and fragmented land parcels across their range. **In France that is restricted to Corsica and the Var where its stronghold is within the Massif des Maures.**



Reproduction and hibernation:

Generally speaking, Hermann's tortoises start mating at the end of July and continue through the summer. Sperm is stored by the female for use in the next season, as eggs are laid between May and July in France. The eggs hatch in early September. This species hibernates from November to March, with occasional and brief emergences during winter.

Threats:

Habitat loss through urbanisation, forest fires and tourism are of major concern for this species, with pleas for its protection going as far back as 1925. Changes in agricultural practice have also heavily impacted them. The loss of clearings that were traditionally maintained by people has forced large numbers to nest together in the few remaining sites. This unnaturally high density of nests attracts mammalian predators which have been found to destroy 90% of nests each year.