

Marine Science Center Resident Terrestrial Reptile Guide



Gopher Tortoise

Gopherus polyphemus

- **Range:** Southeastern United States
- **Habitat:** Gopher tortoises live their lives entirely on dry land in longleaf pine and dry oak sandhills. They also live in scrub, dry hammock, pine flatwoods, dry prairie, coastal grasslands and dunes, mixed hardwood-pine communities.
- **Diet:** Plants, grass, flowers, mushrooms, fruits and berries.
- **Weight:** Adults 8 to 15 pounds
- **Life Span:** 80 years in the wild and more than 100 years in captivity
- **Gopher tortoises** dig burrows that vary from 3 to 52 feet long and nine to 23 feet deep . Their burrows also provide refuge for about 360 other species including; snakes, frogs, mice, foxes, skunks, opossums, rabbits, quail, armadillos, burrowing owls, and many invertebrates. Habitat destruction is a significant threat to gopher tortoises, and they are currently protected by federal law under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- **MSC:** Winkie, acquired 2003, struck by car, shell injuries, part of beak missing causing eating problems, non-releasable, on display from our outside terrace



Florida Box Turtle

Terrapene carolina bauri

- **Habitat:** Found in damp environments, such as wetlands, marshlands, and near swamps, but usually does not enter water deep enough to swim.
- **Range:** Endemic to the state of Florida and the extreme southeastern portion of Georgia
- **Diet:** Box turtles mainly feed on a variety of insects such as slugs, earthworms, beetles, crickets, flies, and spiders, but also berries, moss, and mushrooms
- **Size:** Adults reach a length of 4 to 6 inches
- **Life Span:** Up to 50 years
- **The Florida Box Turtle** has a narrow and highly domed shell with a hinged plastron that allows it to close its shell tightly to avoid predation.
- **MSC:** : Kringle, acquired 2007, shell deformity, can not fully close shell, non-releasable



Florida Pine Snake

Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus

- **Habitat:** The pine snake inhabits pine flatwoods, sandy pine-oak woodlands, prairies, cultivated field, open brushland, rocky desert, and chaparral.
- **Range:** Southern South Carolina to Georgia and Southern Florida
- **Diet:** The pine snake preys on rats, mice, moles, other small mammals, and eggs
- Size:** Adults reach a length of 48–100 inches
- **Life Span:** Up to 20 years
- **Pine Sankes** are excellent burrowers, spending the majority of their time underground. Their occasional surface activity can be observed in the spring through the fall, particularly May to October.
- **MSC:** : Toby, popular education animal for our “reptile Live” presentations, on display in our classroom/lab

