ANIMAL HOUSE SYSTEM FOR FRESHWATER TURTLE (*Hydromedusa tectifera)**

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The present study deals with a protocol for captive maintenance of the freshwater turtle (*Hydromedusa tectifera*). Due to the fact that research on this specie is lacking their habits, biology, phisiological, haemathological and biochemical values are almost totally unknown. This research (24 month long) was carried out at the Veterinary Hospital (UFPR) in a 30m^2 covered area, 5 meters high, provided with a ventilation system and some transparent tiles allowing to diffuse natural light. The turtles were divided in twelve glassfiber water tanks (1000 liters) contaning 2 to 3 animals each one. The water was filtered and the temperature controlled by means of a thermostate maintaining the temperature at 25^{o}C. Artificial fluorescent light were provived for 12 hour/day. At least 1 hour/week UV light was used (Super UV Daylight fluorescent, 3% UVB and 7%UVA). The level of water was 23 cm high. Each water tank was provided with small plastic boxes that openned billateraly (27 cm x 44 cm x 15 cm) used for to cover the freshwater turtles. The daily care included animal visual inspection, water tank cleaning with manual removal of the residues (food remains, feces and cutaneous scaling) using a special net. The freshwater turtles were fed with pieces of fish. Weekly they were weight up. Daily notes were registered in forms. The freshwater turtles rescued in an event of oil spile remained 30 days withouth feeding, the stress being probably the cause of the inannition, since animals that were recently captured, but didn`t come from an accident area, ate at the first day of captivity. For more than a hundred days period, 27 animals were maintained in these conditions. They got weight and sick animals had clinical recover (deaths happenned, however not attibuted to the maintenance conditions in captivity). It was observed agression among the freshwater turtles (bitten), specially during the feeding. It was concluded that the prevention of cutaneous lesion due to abrasion is very important. The rough and sharp surfaces must be avoided.

Key Words: Turtle, *Hydromedusa tectifera,* animal house.
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