

Red-Footed Tortoise

Geochelone carbonaria

Size

Male red-footed tortoises grow to 13.5 in (34 cm) long.

Female red-footed tortoises grow to 11.25 in (29 cm) long.

Habitat

Red-footed tortoises are found in forests and grasslands.

Range

Red-footed tortoises live throughout Central and South America from Panama to Argentina. They are also found on the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Barbados.

Diet

Red-footed tortoises are primarily herbivorous but will also eat some animal matter, such as small invertebrates. Most of their food comes from leaves, grasses, fungi, fruits and flowers.

Red-footed tortoises are an important vehicle for the distribution of seeds throughout the forest.

Reproduction

Breeding occurs at the beginning of the rainy season. Males will establish dominance for mating rights by exhibiting jerky head movements and attempting to flip each other over. After mating, females bury 5-15 eggs in nests excavated in leaf litter on the forest floor. Incubation time in the nest varies with local conditions, but typically eggs hatch after 150 days.

At this point, hatchlings dig themselves out from the nests which are approximately 20 inches (51 cm) deep.

Lifespan

Red-footed tortoises can reach ages of 50 years or more.

Conservation

The conservation status of red-footed tortoises is unknown. While not thought to be endangered, this species is at risk due to habitat loss and harvesting for meat, as well as collection for the pet trade.

Marineland Dolphin Adventure

Est. 1938

Marineland Dolphin Adventure was founded as Marine Studios on June 23, 1938, designed to be an underwater film studio providing Hollywood movie makers with a window to the sea.

Over the years, Marine Studios served as the set for numerous films such as “Revenge of the Creature” (1955) and “Zaat” (1971). Marine Studios also served as the set for an episode of ABC’s “Benji Takes a Dive” (1981), which featured the first SCUBA diving dog. We continue to serve as a film studio, most recently involved in the filming of “Bernie the Dolphin” (2018).

The visionaries who worked together to create Marine Studios were some of the most successful and well-connected men of their time: Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney founded Pan American Airlines and financed “Gone with the Wind”. He served as the Chairman of the Board for Marine Studios. Douglas Burden, trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, served as the first President of Marine Studios. Grandson of legendary Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy, Count Ilia Tolstoy acted as the Studios’ first Vice President and General Manager. It was the vision and determination that these men had that brought such success to Marineland from the beginning.

Based on the public’s fascination with marine science and passion for marine conservation, Marineland evolved to become Florida’s #1 tourist attraction and the first place to successfully train and breed bottlenose dolphins. So much of what we now know about marine life was discovered right here!

Marineland is proud to have played a part in changing our community’s relationship with the oceans from one of fear and dominance to one of respect and love. Marineland’s role in our community is surely one of the reasons that we are still here, 80 years later, and still being honored with the opportunity to teach and inspire.

