



**Kinixys nogueyi** is a medium-sized light brown tortoise. On the back of its shell, the tortoise has a 90-degree hinge which, when closed, can protect its rear legs and tail from predators. This broad band of flexible connective tissue is located between the 4th and 5th costals and the 7th and 8th peripherals in adults.

The scutes on its slightly domed and elongated shell typically have a radiating pattern of dark patches, though these can fade. Adult males have a concave belly. A fascinating smaller sized tropical, African species with beautiful large eyes and a quiet but interesting personality.

- Scientific name: *Kinixys nogueyi*
- Distribution: Gambia, Cameroon
- Average Size: 0.2 m (0.6 ft)
- Life Span: 25 years or more
- Difficulty: Advanced

### **Housing**

I keep my *Kinixys nogueyi* in open topped homemade tortoise tables made from plywood, which is waterproofed with a non-toxic rubber coating which can be painted on top if another color is required. The males are to be kept alone due to aggression among the males. My pens measure 1.2 x 1.2 meters (4 x 4 feet) and in the summer they can roam a 3.6 x 3.6 meters (12 x 12 feet) fenced in area outdoors on sunny warm, days. I like to put my kinixys outdoors on warm sunny days- usually at least 20 °C (68 °F) or above.

Ensure they are in a secure fenced area and have access to shade and water and check on them frequently. They need to be protected from predators such as family dogs, cats, birds and wild animals. *Kinixys nogueyi* really enjoy roaming around, searching for insects and grazing on safe plants whilst absorbing the UV-something all lights cannot replicate perfectly compared to the sun.

### **Hide Box**

*Kinixys nogueyi* love a moist and warm environment and shady places to hide. If you provide plants, please ensure they are edible to tortoises such as the common Spider plant.

**Substrate** I have used both peat moss and coconut coir and found them both to be a good choice in helping keep humidity in the enclosures. The substrate can be misted to keep it moist. Leaf litter can be added in the substrate too to keep the proper humidity levels.

### **Lighting/Heating**

I use T5 tube lights in a 5.0 intensity as *Kinixys nogueyi* are more active at dawn and dusk so do not appreciate the bright intense lighting. MVB bulbs could be used on a timer to provide both heat and UV if desired. They do however prefer heavily planted pens so they can hide as they can be a little shy. I have the lights on 12-14 hours in summer and 10-12 hours in winter. These tropical tortoises must not be hibernated but may experience a natural decline in activity over winter. They like to be maintained at 24-27 °C (75-81 °F) some will occasionally bask but the bask temperature needs to be no higher than 28 °C (83 °F).

### **Water**

Constant access to clean water that they can soak in is a must. Please ensure the water is not deeper than halfway up their shell to prevent drowning.

### **Humidity**

Humidity should be at least 70%. You can achieve that by ensuring that one of the hides is kept moist by misting or adding moistened sphagnum moss or terrarium moss. These tortoises appreciate a warm (like for a human baby) bath daily as babies and every week for adults. If the tortoise's slowdown in the winter, you can keep it slightly drier to mimic their dry season but the bathing and access to water is still important to keep them hydrated.

### **Feeding**

*Kinixys nogueyi* are omnivorous and insectivorous and in the wild this species would eat snails, millipedes, slugs, and other insects-they love to chase down their food and catch insects. When they hunt, they lift their bodies high off the ground and move surprisingly fast. Other forms of protein can be offered too such as an occasional pinkie mouse (frozen thawed not live.)

They love to eat good quality greens such as dandelion, endive, chicory, turnip greens, clover, plantain etc., as well as many fruits. Their favorites I find are mushrooms, melon especially watermelon, cooked sweet potato, berries, flowers such as hibiscus, rose petals honeysuckle flowers. I offer tortoise Mazuri on a weekly basis for variation. I sprinkle a calcium and vitamin supplement on their feed on a twice weekly basis.

### **Handling**

The *Kinixys* species are fascinating to watch but they typically do not appreciate being picked up frequently. They do stress a little easier than some species so try to keep handling to a minimum and enjoy watching your secretive tortoise as they are an interesting species.

### **Cleaning**

Spot clean as you see feces and completely change out substrate a few times a year as needed. They frequently defecate in their water bowls which is useful to see.

### **Health Problems**

So far in my years of keeping this species I have had no issues with health, but they can be susceptible to worms and other parasites, so ensure you keep them apart from different species and if you see persistent runny stools or weight loss- be sure to get a fecal sample analyzed by your reptile vet.

### **Source**

*Written by Louise Bonser*

### **Prairie Hills Tortoises**