



#### This turtle's story

This adult female box turtle was picked up along the road by a family traveling from Md. to Philadelphia as they thought it would be a good pet. They stopped at a Smyrna pet store to buy some food. There, employees told them that the turtle was injured and should be evaluated by a rehabber. The family got irritated and left without giving any more information. Although this turtle had suffered a severe injury, the shell has healed and the turtle could have been released. However, since we have no idea where it was originally picked up, it cannot be let go.

Most people have no idea of the amount of care that a turtle requires. Temperature regulation is critically important and full spectrum UVA and UVB lighting is required for food digestion and growth. A wide variety of food items, including live insects in many cases, is also needed to provide adequate vitamins and nutrition. Many of the turtles we receive with health issues are because of improper care. Also, turtles, especially box turtles, can live 50 years or more. In Delaware, the law says that any reptile taken from the wild and held 30 days or longer, cannot be released due to the danger of passing on diseases acquired during captivity to wild turtles. This means that a turtle taken from the wild as a pet will have to be held for 50 years or longer.