Bell’s hinged tortoise (*Kinixys belliana*)

The Bell’s hinged tortoise is a medium-sized tortoise with an elongated carapace and a movable rear hinge. This species is one of only four tortoises in the world to possess this unusual structure. They have tails with a clawlike tip and a small head with a nonprojecting snout. Their color and pattern varies, but they typically bear a pattern of yellow or reddish-brown scutes (thick, horny or bony plates) with dark brown or black edges. Males tend to be more faded in coloration and also possess a larger tail.

**Fun Facts**

1. This species is one of only four tortoises in the world to possess the unusual hinged back structure.

**Habitat**

Bell’s hinged tortoises tend to live in areas that have a distinct wet and dry season. They are most often found in savannas, grasslands, plains, and dry brush.

**Diet**

Vegetation, fruits, insects, and carrion

**Predators**

Monitor lizards, raptors, hornbills, and hyenas

**Behavior**

Bell’s hinged tortoises are active during the wet season, while they spend the dry season in torpor or dormancy in burrows or in the mud at the bottom of drying waterholes. The hinged tortoise is virtually immune from attacks by smaller predators. When threatened or attacked, they close shut the back of their shells to protect their hind legs while simultaneously pulling their head into the front of their shell.

**Breeding**

Breeding is thought to occur during the wetter months. Females will dig a hole to lay up to 10 elongated, brittle-shelled eggs. Laying can occur at 40-day intervals. After an incubation period that generally lasts between 90 and 110 days, but can be up to a year, the hatchlings emerge.

**Size**

Length: 15-22 cm

**Weight**

1-2 kg

**Life Span:** Up to 22 years

**Incubation Period:** 90-110 days, but can be up to a year

**Average number of offspring:** 2-10