

## shopping list for needed supplies

- ☐ appropriately sized habitat
- ☐ book about aquatic turtles
- ☐ commercial aquatic turtle food
- ☐ treats
- ☐ substrate
- ☐ heat light
- ☐ heat fixture
- ☐ under tank heater
- ☐ UVB lighting
- ☐ vitamin supplement
- ☐ calcium supplement
- ☐ cricket keeper
- ☐ cricket food
- ☐ thermometer
- ☐ humidity gauge

## sources

Speak to an associate about the Petco library of books on red-eared sliders.

Speak to an associate about our many private brand items available for the care and happiness of your pet.

Because all turtles are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Salmonella, always wash your hands before and after handling your turtle and/or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of diseases.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5 and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing and/or caring for a turtle and should consider not having a turtle as a pet. For more information regarding turtles and disease, go to the Center for Disease Control at [cdc.gov/healthypets/](http://cdc.gov/healthypets/) and [petco.com/caresheet](http://petco.com/caresheet).

This care sheet can cover the care needs of other species. See [petco.com](http://petco.com) for more information.

# red-eared slider

*trachemys scripta elegans*



## care sheet

**Originating in North America, the red-eared slider is named for the distinctive red streak on each side of its face. The red-eared slider is primarily aquatic and will emerge from the water for basking.**

### red-eared slider facts:

average adult size: 6 to 12 inches long

average life span: 20-40 years  
with proper care

diet: omnivore

*Will reach adult size in 12-18 months under ideal conditions; upgrade habitat size as your turtle grows.*

**Note:** The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the sources on the following page or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

diet

A well-balanced red-eared slider diet consists of:

- Non-toxic aquatic plants (anachris, water lettuce), dark leafy veggies and sliced veggies such as squash and carrots.
- Comet goldfish, earthworms and insects may be offered as treats.
- Red-eared sliders need a pelleted commercial diet.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your red-eared slider:

- Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times.
- Feed juveniles daily, adults every other day.
- Consider a separate feeding tank as aquatic turtles are messy eaters.
- Sprinkle food with calcium supplement daily and a multi-

vitamin supplement once or twice a week.

housing

- Size - appropriate size habitat, at least a 40 gallon breeder tank with a screened lid so the turtle can't escape. A good rule of thumb is 10 gallons per inch of turtle; adult turtles will require more room.
- Habitat - aquatic turtles drink the water they swim in, so it needs to be changed frequently.
- Substrate - slate, rock, or a large smooth gravel, too large to eat, is optional; water for swimming area; some aquatic turtles require a shallow area they can rest in the water with their head sticking out. Red ears require a turtle dock area to bask out of the water, other turtles require dry land areas outside of the water; create slopes for easy entry and exit to water.

- Temperature - temperature gradient (95°F for the warm end/basking area and 75°F for the cool end/water); recommend radiant heat; use an incandescent light or ceramic heater as primary heat source.
- Lighting - UVB rays with full spectrum lighting for 10-12 hours a day is required; incandescent lighting is needed for basking area.
- House adult aquatic turtles alone and do **not** house different turtle species together.

normal behavior

- Turtles do not like frequent handling and may bite when frightened.
- Aquatic turtles are excellent swimmers.
- Turtles will bask regularly under a heat lamp in a dry, warm area.

habitat maintenance

- Thoroughly clean the habitat at least once a week: place turtle in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all traces of bleach smell. Add clean, dechlorinated water, with a temperature range from 70-75°F before returning turtle.

grooming & hygiene

Keep the habitat clean and remove uneaten food and feces right away.

signs of a healthy animal

- Active and alert
- Eats regularly
- Healthy, hard shell with no lesions
- Clear, bright eyes with no swelling
- Healthy skin with no sores
- Clear nose and vent

red flags

- eye, nose, or mouth discharge
- abnormal feces
- discolored, bumps or spots on shell or skin
- sneezing, runny nose
- lethargic
- frantic swimming

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
GI tract parasites	poor appetite, listlessness, possibly diarrhea and anal prolapse.	consult your exotic animal veterinarian as soon as possible.
respiratory infection	open mouth breathing, eye nose and/or mouth discharge; sneezing. can be caused by a cold habitat.	consult your exotic animal veterinarian and ensure habitat is appropriately warm.
shell rot/ulcers	swollen eyes; may be caused by a vitamin A deficiency.	consult your exotic animal veterinarian and ensure daily cleanings and/or diet changes.
eye or respiratory infection		consult your exotic animal veterinarian and use a vitamin supplement.