RED EAR SLIDER CARE

The first important topic this Red eared slider care sheet will address is the habitat or living environment that your turtle will need.  Red eared sliders kept in captivity as pets can be placed outdoors in a garden pond as long as the climate is appropriate and there is an enclosure to keep safe from predators.  There should also be a source of freshwater or filtration to keep the water quality high.

Tank Size

More often, these turtles are kept indoors in a tank, aquarium, or terrarium.  As a hatchling or baby, the minimum tank size would be 20 gallons.  When figuring what tank size is right for your turtle, estimate that your turtle will need about 10 gallons of water per inch of length.  Although you won’t be able to tell the gender until your slider reaches about 4 inches in shell length, keep in mind that these turtles grow up to 8-9 inches for males and 11-12 inches for females.  This means that as a full grown adult turtle, they will need a tank that holds 90-120 gallons of water.

Water

Red eared slider turtles are mainly aquatic and will spend a lot of time swimming.  Fill your aquarium about 2/3 to 3/4 full of water to make sure your slider has enough space to swim.  The water temperature should be about 80 degrees F for hatchlings and babies, and about 75 degrees F for young adults and adults.

Submersible heaters are recommended to regulate and maintain water temperatures.  And the appropriate filters for the tank size need to be used to keep the water clean.  Even with filtration systems, you will still have to do routine water changes.  A 75% water change every 2-3 weeks will ensure the water quality remains high, which prevents illness and keeps your turtle happy.

Basking

Your turtle’s tank enclosure will need a platform for basking and resting.  You can use natural or artificial platforms, and it should be large enough to support your turtle and provide enough space for basking under a lamp as well as enough space for resting in an area that isn’t heated by the lamp.  You will need a UV lamp for basking that should be kept at 85-90 degrees and left on for 12-14 hours each day.  Your turtle will need to use this area to warm up and completely dry off when not swimming.

**Red Eared Slider Care Sheet – Diet Guidelines**

The second important topic this Red eared slider care sheet will address is diet, the food your turtle will need.  Red eared slider turtles are omnivores and need both meats and veggies.  These turtles are more carnivorous when young, and then become more herbivorous as they get older.  You can feed both natural and commercial food to your turtle.  You may find your turtle is picky, but remember to keep the diet balanced and offer meats and veggies.

The following items make good food for your slider turtle:  Earthworms, mealworms, crickets, and small live fish.  Greens and veggies like collards, kale, shredded carrots, and green beans.  Commercial pellets, and occasionally some fruits like cantaloupe, banana, and strawberries.

Your turtle will also need supplements for calcium and vitamins like D3, which can be found at pet stores.  Items you can use to supplement calcium in your Red eared slider’s diet include cuttlebone (with hard backing removed), eggshells, or sand dollars.

Babies and young adults can be fed one small meal a day.  After about 6 months, young and adult turtles can be allowed to eat until full and fed 2 to 3 times each week.  Try to avoid overfeeding your turtle as it can lead to health problems.

Turtles must eat under water, and it’s recommended that you use a separate tank or enclosure for feeding.  This will keep the living area and water cleaner and be easier on you and your turtle.

NEVER use paint, soap, or oils on a turtle shell. Their shells are actually their ribs and spinal columns fused together. The shell is bone and is connected to their bodies. The shell is covered with chitin. This is a biological porous material similar to our own fingernails. It has microscopic holes that allow air and water to transfer to their bodies. Covering the shell with oils or paints will block circulation. The UV rays they absorb from the sun will also be blocked. They will not be able to develop, grow, or maintain proper health. No cleaners should ever be used other than room temperature water. If necessary you can use a soft toothbrush to scrub the shell, but never use sandpaper or abrasive scrubbers as this can hurt the tortoise and the protective layer of the shell.

**Red Eared Slider Care Sheet – Points to Remember**

There is a lot to learn when taking care of turtles, but providing the right habitat and diet are very important places to start.  Remember to keep an eye on your turtle to make sure there aren’t any questionable changes.  Being aware of your turtle’s needs will keep you well prepared to handle any potential issues.  Be sure to wash your hands after touching your turtle, enjoy the time spent in each other’s lives, and take pictures because they grow up so fast!  Hopefully this [Red eared slider care sheet](http://redearedslidercare.net/goto/http%3A/www.redearedslidercare.net) has given you the knowledge needed to  get a good start with your new turtle.

If you have questions or concerns please contact us through our website using the contact form. www.creepycrittersrescue.com