

**Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society**  
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**Common name:** Red-Eared Slider

**Scientific Name:** *Trachemys scripta elegans*

**Native to:** Mississippi River valley and tributaries from Indiana to the Gulf of Mexico

**Size:** Average adult is 5-8 inches; females are larger than males of same age.

**Life span:** 15-25 Years

**General appearance:** Young are bright green with yellow markings and a red stripe just behind the eyes. Colors dull with age.

**Housing requirements:**

**Enclosure:** Should be mostly aquatic. Minimum dimensions for tank are: width - 3 times the shell length and length - 6 times the shell length. Minimum depth of the water should be as deep as the shell is wide. A basking area is needed to allow the turtle to get out of the water to dry completely. UV lighting can be beneficial.

**Temperature:** The water should be 70-750 F and can be maintained with a submersible aquarium heater. The basking area should be 84-880F during the daylight period. This can be maintained with an incandescent light.

**Substrate:** Substrate is not recommended. Frequent water changes make it difficult to clean.

**Diet:** Feeding should be daily with all they can eat in 45 minutes. Remove all food remaining after that time, except for greens. Just because they beg for food does not necessarily mean they're hungry, this is a trained condition. Diet should be at least 65-85% meat consisting of commercial turtle food, trout chow, beef heart, cooked chicken, fish live or fresh caught (not frozen). Meat should be dusted once a week with a good herp vitamin containing D3. Dark green leafy vegetables can be used to fill the rest of the diet.

**Maintenance:** Water should be clean and clear. Waste should be removed whenever it is found. Filtration prolongs the time between water changes, but should not be used as a substitute for water changes. Wastewater should not be emptied into a sink that is used for food preparation or personal hygiene. Hands and any other part of your body that comes in contact with the water should be washed thoroughly with anti-bacterial soap.

**Other references or recommended reading:**

General Care and Maintenance of Red-Eared Sliders: Philippe de Vosjoli

Encyclopedia of Turtles: Dr. Peter C. H. Pritchard

Turtles of the World: Carl H. Ernst and Roger W. Barbour

Encyclopedia of Keeping and Breeding Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles: A. C. Highfield