



# Jungle Bob's Care Sheet

## Red-Eared Sliders

*(Pseudemys scripta elegans)*

### General Information

Although the hardy Red-Eared Slider makes a wonderfully responsive pet, its size and potential lifespan (to 40+ years) can be a bit much for some owners. Please read the following information carefully before purchasing a pet turtle.

The Red-Eared Slider's native range includes much of central and southern North America, from West Virginia to New Mexico, Florida and central Mexico, and north along the Mississippi River to Nebraska. Introduced populations live in most US states and in over 40 other countries. Sliders may be found in swamps, lakes, streams, tidal creeks, park ponds, polluted urban rivers, and numerous other habitats.

Red-Eared Sliders have a red or orange stripe behind the eye and a carapace clad in olive to olive-brown (bright green in hatchlings). The carapace and greenish skin are marked with yellow stripes, and the yellow plastron is blotched with black. Females reach 8-12 inches in length, while males top out at 5 inches.

### Housing

A 55-75 gallon or larger aquarium will be needed for an adult female, while a male will need a 30 gallon or larger tank. Red-Eared Sliders are best kept in bare-bottomed aquariums, as gravel complicates cleaning, and may be swallowed. Red-Eared Sliders need a dry surface on which to rest and bask. Commercial turtle docks, tank toppers, and cork bark flats work well. Powerful [filters](#) and regular partial water changes are essential.

Sliders require 8-12 hours per day of [UVB light](#), which enables them to produce vitamin D3. Vitamin D3 metabolizes the calcium in their diet. Calcium is needed for proper bone development. Inadequate UVB exposure and calcium intake will result in a crippling and often fatal condition known as Metabolic Bone Disease. Also, it is very important to change your UVB bulb every 6-8 months, as after this time it stops producing adequate UVB.

If you're not sure whether your bulb is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test it for you.

A water temperature of 75-82 F and basking site of 90 F should be maintained. As adults may break typical aquarium heaters, it's best to choose a model designed for use with turtles, or to protect the heater with PVC pipe or decorative [Heater Cover](#).

### **Diet**

Pet sliders should be offered a diet comprised of whole minnows, shiners, and earthworms, along with dandelion, collard/mustard greens, and other produce. A [high quality commercial turtle chow](#) can comprise up to 60% of the diet, and crickets and other insects may be used to add variety. A turtle calcium block should also be available.

### **Cleaning and Handling**

Leftover food should be removed from the aquarium daily, and weekly partial water changes are essential. The filter media should be replaced as directed by the manufacturer. Removing your turtle to an easily-cleaned container for feeding will lessen the filter's workload.

Red-eared sliders are very responsive to their owners, rushing over for food when one enters the room, but usually bite or struggle if picked up. Always wash your hands before and after handling any animal.

### **Fun Fact**

The Red Eared Slider has been designated as one of the "World's 100 Worst Invasive Species" by a major conservation organization. Introduced populations are negatively affecting native species in Japan, Brazil, South Africa and 40+ other countries.

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[www.JungleBobsReptileWorld.com](http://www.JungleBobsReptileWorld.com)

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