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
Ask an associate about Petco's selection of books on Red-Eared Sliders and the variety of Petco Brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All Petco Brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

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. Go to the Centers for Disease Control at cdc.gov/healthypets/ for more information about turtles and disease. Go to petco.com/caresheet to download other helpful Care Sheets.

This care sheet can cover the care needs of other species. See petco.com for more information.

Red-Eared Slider
_trachemys scripta elegans_

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
- diet: omnivore

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

Note: The information in 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.

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Care Sheet

Red-Eared Slider
*trachemys scripta elegans*

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

**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.

**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.

**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.

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

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

**common health issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Issue</th>
<th>Symptoms or Causes</th>
<th>Suggested Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GI tract parasites</td>
<td>Poor appetite, listlessness, possibly diarrhea and anal prolapse.</td>
<td>Consult your exotic animal veterinarian as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory infection</td>
<td>Open mouth breathing, eye nose and/or mouth discharge; sneezing. Can be caused by a cold habitat.</td>
<td>Consult your exotic animal veterinarian and ensure habitat is appropriately warm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shell rot/ulcers</td>
<td>Swollen eyes; may be caused by a vitamin A deficiency.</td>
<td>Consult your exotic animal veterinarian and ensure daily cleanings and/or diet changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye or respiratory infection</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consult your exotic animal veterinarian and use a vitamin supplement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>