



## Slider Turtles (*Trachemys scripta* ssp.)

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- Sliders are medium sized to large semi aquatic pond turtles indigenous to the southeastern and south central United States, Mexico, and some areas of Central America.
- The shell and skin of these turtles usually ranges from green, olive green, olive brown, or grayish, with the plastron usually being a yellowish orange with dark blotches or markings. The red eared slider subspecies can usually be identified by the distinct red stripe on each side of its head.
- Common subspecies are the red eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) and Yellow bellied slider (*Trachemys scripta scripta*).
- Sliders are very popular pet turtles in the pet industry, but grow to large sizes, require frequent cleaning, and considerable space.
- These turtles may attain longevity of 30-40 years or more under proper care. Sales of turtles under 4" in length are for bona fide educational purposes only.

### **Size**

Adult sliders usually reach a carapace (shell) length of 5-12 inches, which females being larger.

### **Housing**

Sliders are semi aquatic and powerful swimmers. Provide a sturdy, escape proof aquarium or commercially available turtle tub of sufficient size with an elevated dock or basking area/access to dry land using a substrate dam. Provide a minimum of 10 gallons of space per inch of shell, or about 50-120 gallons for most adult sliders. A powerful water filter rated at least twice that of the amount of water in the enclosure is highly recommended for aquatic turtles, as they are messy and require frequent cleaning and regular water changes. Use a submersible water heater with a guard to maintain water temperatures of 75-85 degrees F. Substrate is optional, and foregoing it makes for easier cleaning and maintenance, but small to medium sized gravel can be used. Additional rocks, logs, live or artificial foliage can also be provided for additional foraging and hiding opportunities.

Additional overhead lighting and heating elements are necessary to maintain optimal health and nutrition of sliders. Provide a basking area or platform with UVB and UVA for your slider to emerge completely from the water and monitor at around 85-90 degrees F.

### **Feeding/Diet**

In the wild, sliders are omnivorous, feeding on algae and other aquatic plants, small fish, frogs, crustaceans, insects & other aquatic invertebrates, and carrion (dead animal matter).

In captivity, sliders can be given a variety of prey or food items including commercialized turtle pellets and diets, small feeder fish, leafy greens such as turnip, mustard, and collard greens, superworms, earthworms, mealworms, feeder roaches or crickets, freeze dried shrimp, and even small frozen/thawed pinkie mice. A varied diet is important, and providing some additional vitamin D3 and calcium supplementation during 2-3 times weekly feeding also is beneficial.

### **Handling**

Captive born and raised sliders can become very tame and personable pets, often even approaching their keepers for food. Handling these turtles from the rear of the

carapace reduces the chances of being nipped or scratched when they are threatened, however.

**\*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\***