

# Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

## Red-Eared Sliders (*Pseudemys scripta elegans*)

### General Information

Red-Eared sliders have a wide range and are found throughout the United States and Mexico. These turtles are always found near bodies of water and released pets can found outside their natural range. Male red-eared sliders are smaller than females and adult turtles can range between 5-12 inches. Babies cannot be sexed, however, adults can be distinguished by the longer tails and front claws present on males. Less than 15% of all pet red-eared sliders survive the first year in captivity. Unfortunately, most of these turtles die from improper captive care. Red-eared sliders can be kept outside in a pond in southern California. With proper care, red-eared sliders can live more than 25 years in captivity. Prehistoric Pets promotes responsible pet ownership, never under any circumstances should you release your pet turtle into a local pond or lake. Released red-eared sliders can cause problems with native species and may infect them with disease.



### Temperature and UV Lighting

Red-eared sliders need be kept between 85-90 degrees during the day and the temperature can drop to about 70 at night. Water temperature should be between 73-80 degrees, during the winter you may need a water heater. With proper diet red-eared sliders don't necessarily need UVB lighting, however, it is recommended. UVB lighting allows the turtle to naturally produce Vitamin D3. Vitamin D3 allows the turtle to metabolize the proper amounts of calcium. A UVB light should be on 12-14 hours every day. Without UVB lighting some turtles will eventually get metabolic bone disease. This causes the turtles' bones to get soft and eventually will kill the turtle. When kept outdoors no UVB lighting is needed, natural sunlight covers all requirements. Also it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you're not sure if your UV light is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test the light for you.

### Housing

The cage for the turtle should be big enough for it to have enough room to swim around easily. Red-eared sliders need an area to get out of the water and bask under the lights. For babies and juveniles a 10-29 gallon is sufficient. Two adults can be comfortably housed in a 60 gallon aquarium.

### Food

Red-eared sliders need to eat a variety of foods for proper health. Ideal foods are crickets, superworms, nightcrawlers, fish, pellet foods and dark green lettuces. A mixed diet of these food items, four to five times per week, is ideal and will ensure proper growth and health.

### Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary and we highly recommend a water filter. Any left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The water should be completely changed every month even if you're using a water filter. Red-eared sliders can be handled but will sometimes bite or struggle. Always wash your hands before and after handling them.

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**Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085**

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