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## Red-Eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)

The Red Eared Slider is a freshwater turtle that has a native habitat ranging from Northern Mexico, New Mexico, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and West Virginia, as well as Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee. They are often found in ponds, lakes, marshes, slow-moving rivers, creeks or streams. They are recognized by a red marking on each side of their head. With females being the larger ones, these turtles can reach 10-12 inches in length when fully grown. Males have extra-long claws on their front feet than the females. They also have a much longer tail. Since red-eared sliders are cold-blood, they are unable to regulate their own body temperature, so they thermo-regulate by spending much of their time basking on logs or rocks on hot sunny days, sliding off frantically when approached, hence the name. Red-Eared Sliders hibernate over the winter at the bottom of ponds or shallow lakes where they enter a state of torpor (stagnation of function). Red-eared sliders are omnivores, feeding on vegetation, insects and small fish.

**FEEDING:** Adult crickets can be ordered by the teacher for feeding the turtle. Drop two or three crickets into the turtle's habitat every other day. A Red Eared Slider's diet consists mostly of insects, crickets, mealworms and some vegetation (such as fresh fruits...**NO LETTUCE**) are needed for a healthy diet.

**HABITAT:** The LSC provides a container that the turtle will be shipped in. The container will be shipped with about three inches of water in it. (Tap water is acceptable).The water should be changed every other day or when it becomes dirty. It is very important to **keep the turtle's water clean**. Contaminated water can lead to health problems for the turtle.

The temperature in the turtle's container should be between 75° - 85°F.

- Anyone who handles the animal or its caging **MUST WASH THEIR HANDS** with soap and water **BEFORE** and **AFTER** handling.
- **ADULT SUPERVISOR** is always necessary if students chose to work with the animal only.

Credit by: REPTILE MAGAZINE

Care sheet by: Vin Ma