
AVIAN & EXOTIC CLINIC of the Monterey Peninsula

20 Lower Ragsdale Drive,
Suite 150
Monterey, CA 93940

Red Eared Sliders

Origin: Southeast U.S. Mexico, Central America, Brazil

Life Span: 15 – 25 years

Sexual Maturity: males 2 – 4 years, females 5 – 7 years

Temperature range: Water temperature: 75 – 82F, Air temperature, 75- 82F, Basking temperature 85 – 88F (in dry area).

Heat: Sliders are water turtles. However they do need a dry “haul out” area so that the turtle can bask. A flat rock placed under a ceramic heat emitter or white bulb is a suitable basking area. A thermometer should be placed near the rock to be sure basking temperature is reached. Water temperature should be maintained by using a submersible water heater set to the appropriate temperature. A floating thermometer can be used to ensure water temperature is accurate. A thermometer placed outside of the water, away from the basking area can be used to check air temperature.

Lighting: A full spectrum light (must include both UVA and UVB) should be placed over enclosure within 12 inches of basking area. This light should be changed every 6 months.

Water Quality: Clean water is crucial to your pet’s health. Full water changes are required. The smaller the enclosure and the more turtles you have per tank, the more frequent the water changes must be. A 10 gallon tank should be changed 2-3 times/week while a 50 gallon tank should be changed once weekly. Feeding can also foul the water and it is recommended that you change your water within 12 hours of feeding. It may be preferred to feed your slider in a smaller container that is easily cleaned. You may have to acclimate your turtle to this feeding arrangement. When doing a full water change, be sure to scrub the tank and all tank items thoroughly. If using a siphon to drain tank, do not start flow with your mouth. When refilling the tank be sure to let the water heat up to the appropriate temperature before placing turtles back into enclosure. Water filters may be used to decrease the frequency of water changes; however those do not replace the need to fully change the water. Just because the water looks clean, doesn’t mean it is clean.

Water depth: The water level needs to be at least as deep as the turtle is wide to avoid drowning should it flip over.

Diet: juvenile sliders are primarily carnivorous. Offer appropriately sized whole bodied prekilled guppies to hatchlings and eventually small feeder fish and gold fish. Many sliders enjoy earthworms and a pelleted ration As part of their diet. Avoid wild caught fish as they may transmit parasites. Juvenile turtles should be offered food daily while older turtles can be offered food every 2-3 days. As sliders get older a variety of leafy greens may be offered. A good way to offer these greens is to anchor a leaf (such as a romaine leaf) to the bottom of the tank.

