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Red-eared turtle



Main Features :

Native to the southern United States, the red-eared turtle is by far the most sold turtle in the pet store. Farms are now well established, and eggs are imported to meet the demand of the Canadian market. The male is distinguished from the female by its long front-limb claws, by the base of the tail which is wider and by the shape of the plastron of its shell. In the male, the plastron has an inward curvature to be more stable to mount the female during mating, while the female has a curvature to the outside of the carapace. Its features are more evident in the adult turtle. The small turtle of 4 or 5 centimeters that you get yourself young has the potential to grow up to 15 or 20 cm in diameter of carapace, to adulthood, that is to say in eight or nine years. The life expectancy of a red-eared turtle is around 30 years.

Captivity:

The most important notion about the captivity of a red-eared turtle is that it is an aquatic animal. It is therefore essential to have an aquarium containing de-chlorinated water with a floating platform so that it can dry and warm up. To dechlorinate the water, just let the water stand for 24 hours and do not pour the bottom of the tank, because the chlorine accumulates there. The water must be kept very clean thanks to a filtration system adapted to the size of the pond. As an adult, your turtle will need a minimum 100 gallon aquarium. There are at least 4 types of filter: bottom filter, submersible filter, aquarium filter and sponge filter. Each of these has advantages and disadvantages. The choice is made according to each situation. Every week, 10% of the total amount of water must be changed through a siphon and the filter is cleaned at the same time. A maximum of 45% of the total amount of water must be changed monthly. During water changes, the turtle must be placed in a temporary container or the water is at a good temperature. It is not mandatory to see or recommend to put a substrate at the bottom of the aquarium. If you add gravel, the turtle may eat the rocks and suffer obstruction. It is important to respect the good temperatures of the water because it tolerates the cold. If the water is too cold, the red-eared turtle may be stunted and will be more vulnerable to infection, disease or hibernation. A water heater and a heat lamp will be essential. A temperature below 24 C is harmful for your pet. A heated bulb above the dry platform will be much appreciated by your turtle when sunbathing. However, this simple lighting is not enough. It will install a neon UVA-UVB, because without this source of ultraviolet rays, your turtle will have problems with calcium deficiency, which will lead to complications, even death. It is recommended to change the ultraviolet neon to 6 months to ensure a good efficiency. The red-eared turtle is not adapted to our Quebec winter! If you do not want your turtle, abandonment in a river is not an option! It will not survive winter conditions in Quebec and it will jeopardize our common Quebec species.

Adequate water temperature		
	Hot spot	Cold spot
Day temperature	30 C	25 C
Night temperature	27 C	25 C

Food :

In the wild, red-eared turtles find a wide variety of foods. This allows them to not suffer from vitamin deficiencies. They are omnivorous and eat plants as well as fish, insects or other animals. The young are carnivorous, they eat molluscs, worms, insects and amphibians. As they get older, they become more and more omnivorous. In captivity, it is impossible to reproduce such a wide variety of diets, but the more foods are changed, the less likely it is to cause deficiencies. The other possibility is to provide a commercial tortoise mold. Young turtles should be fed daily, while in adults it is recommended to feed them every other day or even 2 to 3 times a week.



Young turtle	Adult turtle
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¼ commercial diets for aquatic turtles• ¼ animal protein: whole fish, mussels, shrimp, etc.• ½ different vegetables (see vegetable leaves and fruits)• Supplements of minerals and vitamins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ commercial diet for aquatic turtle• ½ different vegetables• Animal protein once a week• Supplements of minerals and vitamins

Frequent health problems:

- **Infections:** Infections can occur in the mouth (stomatitis), on the skin (bacterial or fungal) or in the form of abscess. This condition is often the cause of poor nutrition, excess moisture or poor hygiene.
- **Parasites:** A turtle can sometimes catch parasites by being outside, boarding, being fed by parasitic prey or if its owner has been in contact with parasites that he has brought home unintentionally . If the animal is not treated following the appearance of parasites, it could become anemic and die. Parasites feed on your pet's blood, or they can find the nutrients they need to survive.
- **Obstruction:** An uninformed owner may offer a pet that is too big for a meal to his turtle. The turtle sometimes has eyes bigger than the belly and tries to eat its prey. That's when she may choke!
- **Cloacal Prolapse:** A cloacal prolapse is an externalization of part of the digestive system of your reptile. It is therefore possible to see part of the intestine of your reptile out its cloaca (opening that connects the anus and the reproductive system). A visit to your veterinarian is required!
- **Broken shell:** A break occurs in an accident The owner or a child escapes the turtle, it falls from a piece of furniture or it serves as a toy to your dog. In any case, a visit to the emergency vet is essential!

As with all animals, it is recommended that an examination be conducted after the purchase of a new reptile and an annual check is required. The annual exam helps prevent health problems that may occur and thus save the life of your pet. If in doubt, a visit to the veterinarian is required! A reptile, whatever it is, will hide its symptoms so as not to become an easy prey for predators (humans). At the slightest change in behavior, contact your veterinarian.

