

Turtle Species Native to Southern Ontario

Painted Turtle: red markings on rim of shell; yellow stripes on neck and legs; 11 - 14 cm long; Western Painted, 9 - 18 cm long



Wood Turtle: brown shell with wood-like texture; often found on land; 14 – 20 cm long (**Endangered/Special Concern**)



Spiny Softshell Turtle: flat, soft, olive to brown shell, very long neck; pig-like snout; 12 – 43 cm long; females much larger than males (**Threatened**)



Snapping Turtle: light brown to black shell; long tail with 'dinosaur-like' spikes; 20 – 36 cm long



Blanding's Turtle: greyish brown to black shell; bright yellow chin & throat; bulging eyes; 12 – 18 cm long (**Threatened**)



Stinkpot (Musk Turtle): olive to black, high-domed shell; 2 light yellow stripes on head; light yellow spots on neck, legs, & tail; 5 – 12 cm long (**Threatened**)



Northern Map Turtle: brown shell with light yellow 'map' markings; yellow markings on head, neck, legs and tail; jagged shell rim; 9 – 27 cm long; females much larger than males (**Special Concern**)



Spotted Turtle: black shell with yellow spots; yellow/orange spots on neck, legs and tail; 9 – 12 cm long (**Endangered**)



Careful consideration **MUST** be made before purchasing a red-eared slider as a household pet.

They require a substantial investment of both money and time and you will need to care for it for upwards of 25 years.

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NEVER release your pet turtle in a local pond, lake or river. No one will take your unwanted pet. If you can no longer care for your red-eared slider, please contact the Adopt-A-Pond Programme at the Toronto Zoo as we can sometimes assist with relocation. Additionally, if you observe a red-eared slider in the wild, please submit your sighting to Ontario Turtle Tally so that their frequency can be documented and monitored. While red-eared sliders are non-native species in Canada, Adopt-A-Pond encourages stewardship through responsible actions towards all animals.

Contact Information

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Ontario Turtle Tally:

www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/TurtleTally.asp



Red-Eared Slider (*Pseudemys elegans*)

What You Should Know



- While red-eared sliders are often observed in Ontario, they are NOT native to Canada
- Readily identified by a reddish patch behind each eye
- Range from West Virginia to New Mexico and south to the Gulf of Mexico
- Commonly sold in the pet trade and often released in non-native regions

Thinking about a red-eared slider as a pet?

- **Red-eared sliders are generally sold in pet stores as babies the size of a toonie**



- They require a significant commitment as they can live up to 30 years or more
- Regardless of enclosure size, they will grow to 10-12 inches in length (25-30 cm)
- Red-eared sliders are semi-aquatic; adults require a minimum tank size of 40-50 gallons with space to bask out of the water under specialized (UVB specific), heated light
- They require a varied diet and vitamin supplements. If your turtle is fed an

inadequate diet it may become sick and require a visit to the veterinarian.

- Turtles are known to carry salmonella, which can cause illness in humans

- **Be sure to research the space and long term commitment before purchasing a red-eared slider.**



So, What's the Problem with Red-Eared Sliders?

- They are often released in local parks, forests and water bodies when they can no longer be cared for or when their owner no longer has an interest in them
- Since red-eared sliders are not native to Canada, their introduction can have harmful effects on native species
- The turtles may overwinter in some areas but most freeze to death or slowly die in poor habitats

Why Released Red-Eared Sliders Pose a Threat:

- Many have been able to survive our Southern Ontario climate, competing with native species for habitat and food resources
- Animals released from captivity can introduce disease to local populations



*** 6 of Ontario's 8 native turtle species are at Risk**