



Red Eared Slider

Trachemys scripta elegans

What's the problem

Red Eared Sliders are a popular pet turtle species, widely introduced across North America for their initial small size and bright colouring. Unfortunately many pet owners release these turtles into natural ecosystems, where they can out-compete native turtles and introduce diseases such as Salmonella bacteria.

CHARACTERISTICS



Photo: Wikipedia



Photo: PIRSA

Size	Medium sized turtles (12-29 cm), making them slightly larger than native turtles.
Shell (colour and texture)	The top of the shell (carapice) is a dark brown/green colour with a variety of dark lines and swirls, sometimes with patches of white, red, or yellow. It is weakly keeled (a slight ridge down the middle) with a rough appearance.
Underside	The underside of the shell (plastron) is typically pale yellow with dark blotches.
Eggs	Eggs are white, oval, and approximately 3-4 cm across.
Habitat	Can survive in a variety of waterbodies such as lakes, wetlands and ponds (including stormwater ponds)
Markings	Bright red mark behind ear. Yellow strips running down neck, legs, and tail

Key ID Features

- The presence of a red ear mark behind the ear.
- Yellow striping along the neck, legs and tail.



Photo: Joy-Viola, bugwood.org



Photo: PetGuide

Common Look-a-Likes

Eastern Painted Turtle

Red Eared Sliders could be mistaken for Eastern Painted Turtles, which have similar bright coloured striping but key differences:

- **No bright red spot** behind the ear
- **Smooth shell** with slight ridge
- **Smaller in size** (up to 19cm)



Photo: Reptile Fact

Invasive



Photo: Greg-Schechter

Native