

## TURTLE (Emydura, Chelodina Longicollis)

Turtles are a well-loved and popular reptile companion in Australia. Turtles are a reptile with high maintenance requirements that, when cared for correctly, can live up to 50 years or beyond!

As you may be choosing a new friend for life, it's important to know what he'll need and if a turtle is the right companion for you. All species of turtles are protected under federal Australian law, and must never be taken from the wild.

### COMPANIONS

Your turtle prefers to live in his enclosure alone. Turtles sharing enclosures can result in aggression issues and should typically be avoided.

### ACCESSORIES

In addition to a dry dock, you can also add other decorations or live plants to your enclosure. If you choose to add rocks to your enclosure, it's a good safety measure to choose rocks which are too big for your turtle to snack on! Your turtle may also appreciate enough coverage to be able to hide, but be careful to avoid anything that he may get stuck in, such as cave decorations. You should also take care to avoid any sharp decorations as these can harm your turtle.

### LIFE SPAN

When well cared for, turtles can live up to 50 years of age and beyond!

## TURTLE CHECKLIST

- Enclosure
- Thermometer & Heater
- Lighting
- Dry Dock
- Substrate
- Decorations
- Hiding Place
- Turtle Food

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## TURTLE CARE SHEET

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## ENCLOSURE

Your turtle will need an enclosure that includes space to swim and a spot to 'beach' on. Their dry dock should slope gently into the water or a water-to-land ramp will be required. The dock should be at least one and a half times the length of your turtle. Their swimming water should fill at least half of the enclosure.

Young turtles are best kept inside, in an enclosure approximately 1m long. This will be an adequate home for your turtle for the first 1-1.5 years. An adult turtle will need an enclosure at least 3m long, with water at least 45cm deep, allowing enough space for your turtle to roll over in the water. Water should be changed weekly and tested with an aquarium test kit. You can also consider an aquarium filter to help keep your turtle's water clean. Any water added should be treated with a water conditioner prior to adding it to your enclosure. Your enclosure will also need a thin substrate of gravel or pebbles, which should be rinsed placement. Live plants and driftwood creations can be added to give your enclosure a natural atmosphere. It is also important to have a secure mesh cover on your enclosure.

## LIGHTING

You will need to provide a day and night cycle for your turtle. You can provide this by running a UV light (10.0 UVB minimum) 10-12 hours per day. Your bulbs should be changed every 6 months, as they lose their strength over time. You should also, if possible, allow your turtle 30 minutes of unfiltered sunlight once a day. A proper day and night cycle is essential allows your turtle to continue his natural sleep-waking cycle.



## TEMPERATURE

Your turtle will need a water temperature ranging between 22-26°C and a dry dock temperature ranging between 28-32°C. You should check your turtle's temperatures daily and add a fully-submerged aquarium heater if required.

Your turtle is 'ectothermic', meaning he will regulate his body temperature by behavior. He will use his dry dock to bask and warm up, retreating to the water once he needs to cool down. This basking behavior can also help control fungal infections, help with shedding and prevent growth of algae on his shell. If your turtle has a dark carapace, he will warm up more quickly than a turtle with a light carapace.

The smaller your turtle is, the more susceptible he is to temperature changes, and temperatures should be extra closely monitored.



## FOOD

Long-necked turtles are carnivorous, while short-necked turtles are omnivorous. In the wild, they will feed on a variety of food, including live insects, fish and plant matter.

Your long-necked turtle will usually avoid eating vegetables, and will enjoy a diet of fresh fish, which can be given dead or alive. Frozen fish should only be a small part of your turtle's diet. They can also be given whole mice, which should be cut in to small, bite-sized pieces prior to feeding.

Your short-necked turtle will enjoy a similar diet to above, including whole fish and mice, but will also need a selection of vegetables for a balanced diet. These can include carrots, capsicums or beans, cut in to small, bite-sized pieces.

Your young turtle should be fed daily and once fully grown, two to three times per week. A quality food, with a high calcium content, is critical for the health of your turtle's shell. Your turtle can feast on a variety of food, from fresh fruit and veggies, pellets, frozen food and live food such as woodies, crickets or earthworms. Your turtle may also snack on live aquatic plants.

Semi-aquatic turtles can eat their food in the water and may not need a bowl, however turtles can be very messy eaters! You will need to clean up after your turtle, or feed him in a separate area. After about 20 minutes, any excess food should be removed.