

Yellow-Bellied Slider Care Sheet

(*Trachemys scripta scripta*)

Quick Facts

- **Size:** Males 5-9 inches; females 8-13 inches.
- **Lifespan:** 20-40 years with proper care.
- **Temperament:** Generally active and curious; can be shy but become accustomed to human interaction.
- **Activity Level:** Semi-aquatic; excellent swimmers and basking enthusiasts.
- **Diet:** Omnivorous; primarily aquatic plants, insects, and protein-rich foods.



Overview:

The Yellow-Bellied Slider is a popular freshwater turtle native to the southeastern United States. Known for their vibrant yellow markings and active personalities, these turtles make engaging pets for dedicated keepers. They are semi-aquatic and require both water and basking areas in their enclosure. With proper care, they can live for decades.

Habitat Requirements

Tank Setup

- **Tank Size:** Minimum of 75 gallons for one adult; larger tanks (100+ gallons) are recommended for multiple turtles.
- **Water Depth:** At least 10-12 inches; deeper water is ideal for adult sliders as they are strong swimmers.
- **Substrate:** Optional but can use smooth river rocks or sand; avoid sharp or small gravel.
- **Basking Area:** A large, secure platform or dock where they can fully dry off under heat.

Water Quality

- **Filtration:** A high-quality canister filter or submersible filter to maintain water cleanliness.
- **Temperature:** Water temperature between 75-80°F; 70°F for adults during winter months if brumating.
- **pH Level:** Neutral (6.5-7.5).
- **Cleaning:** Perform 25-50% water changes weekly to ensure a healthy environment.



Lighting and Heating

- **UVB Lighting:** Essential for shell and bone health; provide 10-12 hours daily with a UVB bulb.
- **Basking Spot Temperature:** 90-95°F under a heat lamp.
- **Ambient Temperature:** 75-80°F during the day, 70-75°F at night.

Diet and Feeding

- **Protein Sources:** Commercial turtle pellets, mealworms, crickets, shrimp, and small fish.
- **Vegetation:** Dark, leafy greens (collard greens, dandelion greens, romaine lettuce) and aquatic plants like water lettuce or duckweed.
- **Fruits (Occasional Treats):** Small amounts of berries, melon, or apple.
- **Feeding Frequency:** Juveniles should be fed daily; adults can be fed every other day.
- **Calcium Supplementation:** Dust food with calcium powder once or twice a week.

Handling and Behavior

- **Handling:** Handle sparingly as they can become stressed. Always support the body and avoid dropping.
- **Behavior:** Yellow-Bellied Sliders are curious and active, often basking or exploring their enclosure. They may “beg” for food but avoid overfeeding.

Health and Maintenance

- **Common Health Issues:** Shell rot, respiratory infections, vitamin A deficiency and obesity.
- **Signs of Illness:** Lethargy, swollen eyes, loss of appetite, or wheezing. Consult a reptile veterinarian if symptoms occur.

Fun Facts

1. Yellow-Bellied Sliders are known for their striking yellow markings on their plastron (belly) and neck.
2. They are excellent swimmers and can hold their breath for up to 30 minutes.
3. In the wild, they often bask in groups on logs or rocks near water.

By meeting these care requirements, your Yellow-Bellied Slider can thrive and provide years of enjoyment!