

A Help Guide for At-Risk Red-Eared Sliders in Trinidad and Tobago



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SCHOOL OF VETERINARY
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Introduction

This guide is intended for anyone who would like to help Red-eared Slider Turtles live better lives in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean. It has been produced as a collaboration between the Nurture Nature Campaign (www.nurturenaturett.org), the Trinidad and Tobago Veterinary Association (TTVA), the Veterinary Students Association of Trinidad and Tobago (VSATT), and the Exotics Club at the University of the West Indies School of Veterinary Medicine.

We offer you this guide as Trinbagonian keepers often unknowingly participate in a harmful trade in Red-eared Sliders spanning the Southern Caribbean. Trade research by the Nurture Nature Campaign indicates that there are extensive populations of Red-eared Sliders now in captivity in Trinidad and Tobago, and many of these turtles suffer from poor care practices. Additionally, many Red-eared Sliders have now been released into the wild, creating an invasive threat to our local turtle species, many of which are believed to be endangered by local ecologists.

Though the animal welfare and ecosystem risks associated with Red-eared Sliders are quite serious, positive change for these turtles and our ecosystems is possible. Advocacy campaigns in countries around the world have educated members of the public that they should not release these turtles into the wild. Other efforts have even led to legal changes that prohibit these turtles from being sold.

If you want to stop participating in the harmful wildlife trade, and maybe help end the trade entirely, then this guide is for you. As you will learn, any keeper who wants to make a change should first “Get to Know Your Red-Eared Slider” and learn how to “Give Long-term Care”. And if you are ready, you can even “Be a Turtle Rescuer” to best support the welfare of your Red-eared Slider.

Get to Know Your Red-Eared Slider

The first step in helping any at-risk Red-eared Slider Turtle in captivity is to better get to know the animal. With knowledge comes power. You may be surprised to learn that many keepers do not realize that this species poses an extreme threat of invasive species introduction in the country, and it is one of the “100 most invasive” species in the world. You may also find it interesting to know about these turtles’ natural lives in the wild or how they are unfortunately impacted by the pet wildlife trade.

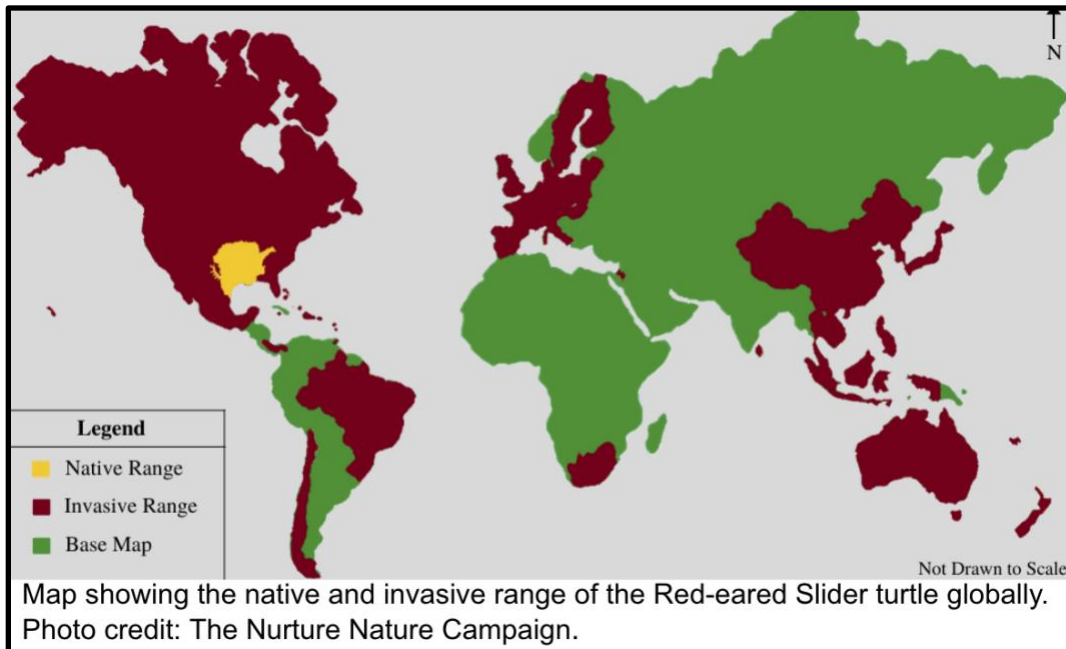
The Red-eared Slider

Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) is the most commonly kept turtle in Trinidad and Tobago. This freshwater turtle is native to North America, specifically the mid- to south-central United States and northern Mexico.



The turtle has been very popular in the global pet trade for decades, leading it to be released into habitats far beyond its native range. Today, the Red-eared Slider is considered to be one of the most invasive species in the world, having spread to countries such as South Africa, Israel, South Korea, Austria, Germany and Australia, among others.

Juvenile Red-eared Sliders were imported into Trinidad and Tobago during the 1980s as part of the pet trade, after which the species was continually bred at different facilities to provide stock for pet stores. Unfortunately, releases and escapes from the pet trade have led to Red-eared sliders becoming invasive in T&T.



The Red-eared Slider is also known as the Red-eared Terrapin, Pond Slider, Water Slider Turtle, and Red-eared Turtle. As you might have guessed, this turtle got its name from the red stripe behind their eyes and the way they slide into the water when there is a perceived threat. The prominent red stripe on each side of the head is a unique feature that distinguishes them from all other turtle species. The red stripe is fainter in female turtles and may have not appeared yet in hatchlings.



Some distinguishing features of the Red-eared Slider are the red stripe behind their eyes and their yellow stripes (left), the keel in the centre of their carapace (centre) and brown splotches against the yellow of their plastron (right).

Photo Credits: Blewulis (left), and J.N. Stuart (centre and right).

Other notable features of the species include green stripes that run down their neck, legs, feet, and tail. The plastron (bottom part of the turtle's shell) is yellow with two rows

of brown splotches. The dark green and brown carapace (top part of the shell) has a slight keel running down the center.

Female Red-eared Sliders are generally larger than males. The average length of adults is 5-8 inches (12.5 - 20.3 cm). Some Red-eared Sliders, however, have been known to reach a length of 11.4 inches (28.9 cm). The length of the carapace can range from 5.9-7.9 inches (15 to 20 cm). Males have thicker and longer tails, and longer claws on their front feet to help them hold on to the female during mating. Males are prone to melanism which causes them to become entirely black (skin and shell) as they age.

Like all reptiles, these turtles are unable to regulate their body temperatures and so they depend on their environmental temperatures for thermoregulation. For this reason, they spend a good part of their days basking under the sun (or an artificial source of heat) to keep themselves warm and maintain their body temperatures.

Red-eared Sliders typically live between 20-30 years, although there have been some sliders known to have lived for more than 40 years. Being in captivity, however, can significantly shorten their life expectancy.

Life in the Wild

In their natural habitats, Red-eared Sliders spend their days basking on logs or rocks under the sun or foraging for food in ponds with dense vegetation. Basking helps regulate their body temperature, boost their metabolism, and get rid of parasites. They also absorb sunlight to make vitamin D3, which is essential for calcium metabolism and utilization.



Red-eared Sliders spend most of their time basking in the sun (left) or foraging for food in the water (right).

Photo Credits: Stan Lupo (left), and MJ Ecker (right).

They prefer bodies of water with soft, muddy bottoms and an abundance of aquatic plants to hide in and feed on, but they can also be found in brackish areas, freshwater, and in moving waters. Their webbed feet make them excellent swimmers, and they can move quickly, making it easy for them to travel between ponds.

In warm climates, Red-eared sliders are generally active year-round. They are diurnal, meaning they are active during the day and spend the night sleeping, usually resting at the bottom of water. In colder climates they can undergo brumation, which is a period of inactivity in reptiles that is similar to hibernation in warm-blooded animals. They will stop eating and defecating, and bury themselves at the bottoms of ponds or shallow lakes, under river banks and rocks, or in hollow stumps near bodies of water. Their breathing slows down, their metabolic rate drops, and they experience an 80% reduction in their heart rate and cardiac output. They can survive without oxygen for weeks, producing energy in the body through a process called glycolysis.

Red-eared Sliders are omnivores, which means their diet is composed of both plant and animal sources. In the wild, their diet typically consists of aquatic vegetation, fruits, frogs and other small amphibians, fishes, and aquatic invertebrates. The diet of adult turtles primarily consists of aquatic vegetation, while juvenile turtles thrive on a diet of 40-50% animal protein.

Red-eared Sliders become sexually mature at different rates depending upon their sex. Males mature at 2-3 years old when their carapace length reaches 9-11 cm, and females mature at 5-7 years old when their carapace reaches 15 cm.

Red-eared Sliders are solitary, but they seek out and socialize with other sliders during mating season. They are very territorial, especially competing males. During courtship, the male wiggles his long claws while swimming in front of the female to entice her to mate.

A female Slider may lay up to five clutches per year, with each clutch consisting of about 6-11 eggs. Females lay their eggs in nests built a few meters above the water. Some females may dig a nest as far as a kilometer away if she finds it a suitable nesting site. A clutch will be deposited once the egg shells are fully formed and environmental conditions are suitable, which is about 3-4 weeks after mating.

Hatchlings emerge from the eggs about 90 days after being laid. They must dig their way out of their nest and are left on their own to forage and thrive. Young turtles prey mostly on small fish, tadpoles, and the eggs of amphibians.

In the wild, the main predators of Red-eared Sliders in their native range are otters, skunks, snakes, frogs, raccoons, fish, and birds. The size, shell thickness, and bite of adult Sliders, however, can protect them from these predators. Hatchlings and juveniles are most at risk because of their small size and their tendency to search for food in shallow bodies of water. In Trinidad and Tobago, it is unknown what species may predate upon Red-eared Sliders and it is possible that they have no such predators.



The Harmful Pet Wildlife Trade

The pet wildlife trade in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Southern Caribbean causes a great many harms to Red-eared Slider Turtles as well as local ecosystems. This includes the long-term mistreatment and premature death of many pet turtles.

Breeding operations that take place in densely populated and unsanitary conditions can encourage the spread of parasites and disease. Red-eared Sliders that escape or are released into the wild can spread parasites and diseases to native turtle populations. Red-eared Sliders can also be very aggressive and outcompete native turtle species for nesting areas, basking sites, and food sources. This can be very harmful to native turtle populations.

Unfortunately, these issues are also common elsewhere in the world. In India, Red-eared Slider turtles are threatening to spread throughout natural water bodies in the northeast, which are home to 21 of 29 vulnerable, indigenous freshwater turtle species (Purkayastha et al., 2020).



Young, commercial bred Red-eared Sliders for sale in a pet shop.
Photo Credit: Socrateis.

Researchers in Japan have found seven different types of parasitic worms in Red-eared Sliders, three of which are not native to Japan. These Red-eared Sliders were most likely brought into Japan from outside the country for sale by traders, putting native species at risk of contracting the parasites (Oi et al., 2012).



Red-eared Sliders for sale in a pet shop.
Photo credit: Nurture Nature.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Red-eared Sliders kept as pets are almost always purchased in pet stores as small hatchlings. Unfortunately, many new turtle keepers are never told that it is illegal to sell such turtles, or that permits are required for their possession. Furthermore, few new keepers are ever made aware that their turtles will grow large and that these invasive turtles should never be released into the wild. Nevertheless, as

turtles become larger and larger, and live extended lives, some owners unfortunately choose to release them. Another concerning problem is that many baby turtles are euthanized by pet shops that are unable to sell them once they are no longer “tiny and cute”.

Many Red-eared Sliders are further mistreated in captivity. Often purchased for small children, these animals may be seriously injured through mishandling or perish due to incorrect home care. Turtle keepers have reported accidentally killing their pet turtles by dropping them or by forgetting to feed them.

Give Long-term Care

The next step in helping a captive Red-eared Slider is to ensure it receives the minimum care necessary to remain healthy and happy in the long term. The Red-eared Slider is one of the few wild animals that should remain in captivity in Trinidad and Tobago since it poses a risk to native species.

For keepers who will be caring for Red-eared Sliders, we recommend focusing on the different requirements below in order to provide these turtles adequate care.

Appropriate Housing

Whether you are housing Red-eared Sliders indoors or outdoors, these turtles require a warm, dry basking area and a large pool of warm water in captivity. Red-eared Sliders require a minimum of a 30-50 gallon tank with a pool and an area for the turtle to crawl out and bask.



It is necessary for the size of the swimming area to be 4-5 times the turtle's carapace length and the depth of the water in the aquarium or enclosure to be at least 1.5-2 times the turtle's shell length, with several extra inches of air space between the surface of the water and the top edge of the tank in order to prevent them from escaping (Pollock, 2016).

Since Red-eared Sliders are messy eaters and produce a lot of waste, we recommend that a water filter system be put in place, or that keepers change the water daily to avoid any infection. Live plants may be added to the tank to assist in removal of nitrate wastes; however, these plants may be eaten by the turtles. Avoid putting small stones and sticks in the tank, since these might be eaten by the turtles and may cause problems in the future. An ideal water temperature for these turtles would be 24°C to 26°C. Keep in mind that fluctuations in water temperature may cause respiratory infections.



In the wild, Red-eared Sliders spend most of their time foraging or basking in the sun. As reptiles, they rely on their environment to regulate their temperature. Basking allows them to take in heat from sunlight to maintain their body temperature, and avoid fungal infections and bone-related diseases. The temperature of the basking area should be about 30°C to 34°C.

If it is not possible for these turtles to be housed outdoors, UV lighting should be incorporated in their tanks as a part of maintaining calcium balance in their bodies. The UV lamp should be kept at a distance of no more than 12 inches from the turtle. We recommend a 12-hour light/dark cycle to ensure that the turtles are exposed to UV light for a minimum of 12 hours a day. Keep in mind that UV lamps lose strength over time. You can test the UV output with a solarmeter and replace as needed, or simply replace the UV lamp every 6-12 months. There is a risk of overexposure to UV light, so the UV lamp should be positioned to the side of the enclosure to create a gradient, and an area

of the enclosure should also be totally covered from the UV light. This allows the turtle to self-regulate its light exposure.

Adding features like rocks, hardwood, and pieces of cork inside their aquarium or enclosure gives the turtles a place to bask. Position these materials to create an incline for the turtles to climb out of the water easily.

If you are housing multiple Red-eared Sliders, keep in mind the possibility that these turtles may breed and produce eggs in captivity, leading to more turtles that will be in your care if you do not dispose of the eggs.

Healthy Food and Water

It is important to note that the nutritional requirements of Red-eared Sliders change as they grow and mature. While Sliders of all ages are omnivores, juveniles require more animal protein for growth and must be fed every day, compared to adults who consume more plants and can be fed once every two to three days. Do not feed these turtles more than what they can eat, otherwise, the excess food will contaminate the water.



Red-eared Sliders eating mealworms.
Photo credit: The Foundation for Heritage Preservation & Legacy Creation.

A combination of the following should be fed (Kaplan, 1994):

- Commercial pellets - no more than 25%
- Animal protein - no more than 25%
- Plant matter - 50% or more

Commercial pellets are best because they are formulated specifically for reptiles and do not decompose fast in the water. For animal protein, small fish and insects can be offered, however, be wary of the source since they may contain bacteria, parasites, or pesticides that may harm the turtles.

When feeding vegetables, it is better to feed Red-eared Sliders fresh leaves of collard, mustard, and dandelion greens. Avoid feeding these turtles iceberg lettuce since it contains very little nutrition. Thawed frozen mixed vegetables may be offered on

occasion, but caution should be exercised because some frozen green vegetables develop thiaminase, which degrades vitamin B. Allow them to gnaw on pieces of cantaloupe with the (well-washed) rind still attached to help keep their beak trimmed.

Red Eared-slider food groups	Some good foods	Preparation
Reptile or turtle food	Pellets, sticks, or tablets	No additional preparation.
Animal Protein	Small Feeder Fish, Earthworms, Shrimp, Krill, Aquatic Snails, Mealworms and Crickets	Live.
Plant matter	Dark leafy greens, Carrots Squash, Green beans, Melons	Shredded.

Vitamin supplements may be prescribed but are not usually necessary if the diet is adequate and balanced. These turtles also require additional calcium, which can be provided with calcium blocks and cuttlebone, so keep some on hand.

Handling

Moving to a new home is very stressful for turtles, so allow them a few days to adjust to their new environment before attempting to pick them up. Red-eared Sliders must be supported from underneath their shell. When holding a turtle, ensure that you support the plastron (bottom shell) as well as their legs. Do not grab a turtle from its carapace

(upper shell) since their spine is fused with their shell and grabbing it will cause stress or injury to the turtles.

Because all reptiles can carry infectious diseases like salmonella, always wash your hands before and after handling reptiles or the contents of their habitat to help prevent disease spread.



Red-eared Slider being handled properly.

Regular Cleaning and Bathing

Since they spend a lot of time in the water, regular shell cleaning can help prevent the buildup of algae. Bathing is also helpful when the turtle is shedding dead skin cells. How often the turtle should be cleaned will depend on the individual turtle. Once you notice algae on the turtle's shell or there is buildup of dirt on the shell or limbs, it's time to clean your turtle.



Red-eared Slider being cleaned properly.
Photo credit: Reptile Guide.

Keep in mind that bath time can be stressful to a Red-eared Slider. Avoid turning the turtle upside down. Support the turtle with one hand while using the other

hand for brushing. When cleaning the belly (plastron), position the turtle in such a way that the head is pointing up at about a 45-degree angle.

Another thing to keep in mind when brushing the turtle's shell is that even though it feels hard and tough, it's actually sensitive. The Red-eared Slider can actually feel the brushing movements on their shell. Brush gently and apply no more pressure than necessary to remove dirt and algae on the shell. The turtle's skin is also sensitive, thus brushing it should also be done with care to avoid skin irritation or injury.

To bathe your turtle, the following supplies should be prepared beforehand:

- A bucket or tub
- Lukewarm water that has been boiled and cooled
- Brush - unused, soft, small
- A cup to scoop water for rinsing

Once you are ready, follow these steps:

1. Use the brush to gently loosen any dirt, debris, or algae from the shell.
2. Scoop some water from the tub and pour over the turtle.
3. Gently brush the turtle's legs and between the shell, head, and tail.
4. Rinse regularly with water from the tub.
5. Carefully check the turtle for any trace of algae or dirt.
6. Repeat the process if you find some areas that need more brushing.
7. Once the turtle is clean and well-rinsed, place the turtle inside the tank.

After bathing the turtle, remember to clean up properly to prevent salmonella. Dispose of the dirty water in the toilet. Do not pour it in your bathtub, bathroom or kitchen sink, or anywhere you will be washing hands or preparing food. Use a disinfectant or a water and bleach solution to clean the container. The tub or bucket should only be used for bathing the turtle and nothing else. Dispose of the brush properly or sanitize it by boiling. Finally, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water once you're done.

Mental Health Support

Like any animal kept in captivity, Red-eared Sliders will thrive with adequate opportunities for physical and mental stimulation. Having something to do will keep them from becoming bored and help them have a long, healthy, and happy life.



Red-eared Sliders enjoying mental stimulation by basking on a bed of gravel, stones and rocks (left) or floating on a log (right).
 Photo credits: Pim GMX (left) and The Lugash (right).

A lack of physical and mental stimulation can also increase a Red-eared Slider’s risk of developing certain health issues, including self-trauma, poor appetite, lethargy, and a shorter life expectancy. See the table for some ways to boost your Red-eared Slider’s mental health.

Ways to Enrich Your Turtle’s Life	
Turtle Toys	Toys for pet turtles are not the same as toys for dogs and cats. There are a variety of turtle-safe toys that you can choose from. Take note that like children, cats, or dogs, your Red-eared Slider can get tired of its toys. Rotating toys every week or so can help preserve their novelty and keep your turtle interested.
Gravel, Stones, and Rocks	Material of various shapes and sizes on the bottom of the tank can provide that much-needed mental and physical stimulation for Red-eared Sliders. Even a variety of shells in their immediate environment can enrich their lives while adding aesthetic value.
Floating Logs	Red-eared Sliders are always on the lookout for a place to climb on. Make sure to get one that is weighted to the base of the tank so it won’t roll over. A floating log in the tank will give your Red-eared Slider something to investigate, climb over, and hide in.
Natural Turtle	Live or dry mealworms, krill, crickets, grasshoppers, or river shrimp are just some natural foods that turtles find tasty. Once you place them in

Foods	the tank they will naturally sink to the bottom, which will encourage your turtle to forage and work a bit for their food. Food should be cut into smaller pieces for smaller turtles.
Feeder Fish	Placing a few guppies or other small fish inside the turtle's tank can give your turtle hours of play and enrichment for several weeks at a time. The feeder fish will keep the turtle's hunting instincts awake. Hunting prey will also give the turtle lots of physical stimulation. This is ideal if you have a large tank.
Decorations Outside the Tank	Ornaments hanging from the tank's top can peak your turtle's curiosity.

Safety in the Household

Red-eared Sliders are known to be carriers of salmonella, a bacteria which can be transmitted to humans and cause infection. Even when they are carrying the bacteria, they remain asymptomatic, which means they do not show any symptoms of illness. Observing good hygiene is very important.

After handling Red-eared Sliders or items from their enclosure, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and running water. Extra precautions must be observed if there are pregnant women, senior citizens, toddlers below five years old, or household members with compromised immune systems.

Living with humans also presents risks to the turtles themselves. Other pets can "play rough" and seriously damage or kill a turtle. A reckless handler can also drop a turtle, which might damage the shell and lead to death or permanent disability.

Veterinary Care

It is important for the turtles in your care to be brought to a veterinarian for a thorough check-up to screen and/or treat them for any diseases they may have.



Regular vet care is required to protect Red-eared Sliders from many preventable health conditions, such as, shell infection (left), ear abscesses (middle) and egg binding (right).
 Photo credits: Exotic Pets Plus Veterinary Clinic.

Newly acquired turtles are stressed and may be infected with bacteria or parasites that can infect other animals, and humans. Keep an eye out for any signs of illness in turtles in your care: cloudy, closed, or swollen eyes; swollen cheeks; open mouth breathing; bubbly mucus around the nose or mouth; runny stools; loss of appetite; listlessness; appearance of spots on the plastron (bottom shell), carapace, or body; soft shell or excessive shedding.

A first meeting with a veterinarian would include a physical examination, discussion on appropriate care practices, and additional laboratory testing if there are signs or risks of additional problems. Also, by getting to know a veterinarian now, you will be ready to act if anything happens, like a physical injury or sudden illness.

Common Diseases in Red-eared Sliders	
Ear Abscesses	<p>These are common and usually caused by bacterial infection. The infection starts in the mouth and travels through the Eustachian tube to the ear canal. Because turtles do not have an open external ear canal, infection accumulates in the ear as a large pocket of pus. The pus hardens, preventing it from draining back into the oral cavity. Hardened pus may burst externally (through the tympanic membrane or ear canal) or cause a large swelling due to the pressure from the growing abscess. This can also cause changes to the skull's shape when left untreated and may result in permanent damage. (Hess & Axelson, n.d.)</p>

Vitamin A Deficiency	This disorder is common in aquatic turtles fed with diets consisting primarily of greens and meat, as well as commercial diets that are not supplemented with vitamin A. Vitamin A deficiency symptoms include swollen eyes, nasal discharge, anorexia, and stunted growth. (Hess & Axelson, n.d.)
Gastrointestinal Parasites	Red-eared Sliders from unsanitary breeding facilities or wild environments are often infected with parasites that go undetected until they are discovered in a fecal examination during a visit from the veterinarian. Gastrointestinal parasites can cause diarrhea or weight loss in severe cases.
Metabolic Bone Disease	Red-eared Sliders can develop metabolic bone disease if they are fed an inappropriate diet that is high in protein (organ meat, krill, pure muscle) and low in calcium. Stunting, deformed shells (too soft or pyramiding), and general lethargy and fatigue are all symptoms of MBD. You should make sure that the turtles in your care get enough UVB exposure.
Shell Infection	Shell infection or shell rot is a common occurrence in turtles that is caused by bacteria, fungi, or parasites. These infections are frequently acquired as a result of trauma, burns, or bites. Certain infections can penetrate deeply into the shell's layers, causing ulcers or pitting of the shell, as well as extension into the bone underneath. The shell's outer layer (keratin) protects the living bone beneath, and the shell protects their internal organs.

Be a Turtle Rescuer

A third and most important final step in helping a captive Red-eared Slider Turtle is to start supporting the long-term well-being of other turtles and ecosystems in Trinidad and Tobago. Our advice at the Nurture Nature Campaign is that you consider becoming a “turtle rescuer” by taking three specific actions.

Action #1: Don't Release This Animal and Get a Permit

Do not release this animal into the wild if you think you can no longer care for it. The Red-eared Slider Turtle is one of the most invasive species in the world and will spread across the country unless measures are put in place. In addition to keeping your turtle, you should comply with local law by obtaining a permit for your animal. You can contact your local government agency for information on how to apply.

Location	Office	Phone	Website
Trinidad	The Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land, and Fisheries	1 868-225-3837	https://agriculture.gov.tt/divisions-units/divisions/forestry-division/permits-keep-protected-animals/
Tobago	The Division of Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment, and Sustainable Development	1 868-639-1966 1 868-639-2234	https://www.tha.gov.tt/divisions/food-security-natural-resources-the-environment-and-sustainable-development

Action #2: Relinquish or Re-Home

If you can no longer care for your turtle, and you are truly committed to giving this animal the best long-term quality of life, you have only two meaningful options.

Option 1 is to relinquish your turtle to a rehabilitation centre, of which there are several in Trinidad and Tobago, or at the Emperor Valley Zoo.

Location	Rehabilitation Centre	Phone	Website
Trinidad	El Socorro Centre for Wildlife Conservation	1 868-366-4369	www.wildliferescuett.org
	Foundation for Heritage Preservation and Legacy Creation	1 868-758-1823	https://www.facebook.com/The-Foundation-for-Heritage-Preservation-Legacy-Creation-350051685718274
Tobago	Corbin Local Wildlife Park	1 868-327-4182	www.tobagowildlife.org

Option 2 is to rehome your turtle with a new family that would like such a pet. You can seek out a new home by posting on social media and sharing this desire with your friends and family. One important aspect to consider, however, is this new family's willingness to learn about appropriate turtle care. A new home does not necessarily mean better care.

Action #3: Stop Buying Wild Animals

The best way to do justice to your Red-eared Slider is to make sure that other turtles like it are never again harmed by the wildlife trade. These turtles simply should not be sold as pets for their many potential harms to the environment. If you really wish to have a pet turtle, see if you can find one seeking a new home.

We also recommend that you consider other alternatives when seeking a pet. There are many wonderful dogs and cats already waiting for new homes at shelters across the country. You can contact your nearest shelter by consulting the table on the next page.

Location	Organisation/Shelter	Contact
Trinidad	Animal Welfare Network (AWN)	Phone: 1 868-269-4296 Facebook Direct Message: @AnimalWelfareNetwork
	Animals 360 Foundation	Phone: 1 868-364-7729 Facebook Direct Message: @animals360foundation
	Animals Alive	Phone: 1 868-709-1151 Facebook Direct Message: @AnimalsAliveTT
	Trinidad and Tobago Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (TTSPCA)	Phone: 1 868-622-1367 1 868-628-1615
Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (TTSPCA)	Phone: 1 868-639-2567
	Venus Doggess of Love	Email: venusdoggessofoflove@gmail.com Facebook Direct Message: @VenusDoggessOfLove

Conclusion

In closing, there are many ways that you can help at-risk Red-eared Slider Turtles in Trinidad and Tobago.

You can get to know your turtle better to appreciate how it is an important part of the natural world and how it presents serious risks as an invasive species in Trinidad and Tobago. In fact, most people are amazed to learn that Red-eared Slider Turtles are considered one of the most invasive animals in the world.

You can learn about appropriate long-term care practices to ensure that your own Red-eared Slider is kept healthy. As you may have learned, caring for Red-eared Sliders is complicated and involves many considerations, from providing housing and nutrition to proper handling and cleaning to mental health support and special safety precautions. Veterinary care is also an essential component of long-term care.

You can also become a turtle rescuer by taking the best steps for your turtle's long-term welfare and the health of our local ecosystems. This includes seeing that you obtain a government possession permit or rehome the turtle if you cannot properly care for it. You can also make sure you will never again support the harmful trade in Red-eared Slider Turtles by following one simple rule: Don't Buy Wild!

Finally, if you have any remaining questions, we welcome you to contact the Nurture Nature Campaign on Facebook or Instagram, by email (nurturenaturett@gmail.com), or through our website (www.nurturenaturett.org).

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