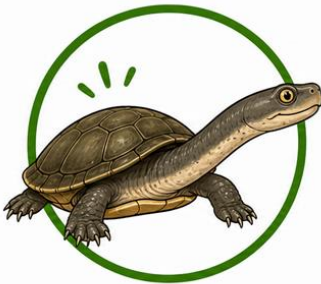


TURTLE CARE GUIDE



EASTERN LONG-NECK



Scientific Name

Chelodina longicollis



Adult Size

20–26 cm



Lifespan

Up to 40 years



Social

Generally best housed alone

MURRAY RIVER SHORT-NECK



Scientific Name

Emydura macquarii



Adult Size

Up to 30 cm



Lifespan

20–50+ years



Social

Generally best housed alone

Housing

Australian freshwater turtles require a spacious aquatic enclosure with clean, temperature-controlled water and a completely dry basking area. The turtle must be able to climb onto the platform easily and fit its entire body out of the water.

Water should be deep enough for normal swimming and diving while allowing the turtle to reach the surface easily. As a minimum, aim for a water depth approximately two to three times the turtle's shell length. Young or inexperienced swimmers should also have resting points close to the surface.

Maintain the water at approximately:

- PH: 7.0 – 7.6
- Ammonia and Nitrite: 0
- Temperature for Eastern long-necked turtles: 18–22°C
- Temperature for Murray River short-necked turtles: 20–25°C

A suitable UVB light (generally 5%) is essential for vitamin D3 production, calcium metabolism, and healthy shell and bone development. Position the UVB light over the basking platform and follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding distance and replacement intervals. UVB does not pass effectively through glass or plastic.

A suitable basking lamp may also be required to provide a warm, completely dry basking area.

Powerful, continuous filtration is essential because turtles produce considerable waste. A canister filter, strong internal filter or purpose-built turtle filtration system is recommended. The aquarium should be biologically cycled, with ammonia and nitrite maintained at zero.

A bare-bottomed enclosure is easiest to clean. Alternatively, use washed river sand or smooth stones that are too large for the turtle to swallow. Avoid small gravel and sharp or abrasive decorations. Sturdy driftwood, plants and underwater resting areas may be included, provided they do not restrict swimming or create places where the turtle could become trapped.

Suggested Products for Water Quality

- **API Turtle Water Conditioner:** Removes chlorine and chloramine from tap water and detoxifies certain heavy metals. Use whenever completing a water change or adding fresh tap water.
- **API Turtle Sludge Destroyer:** Contains beneficial bacteria that help break down organic waste and debris, reducing sludge and unpleasant odours. It supports routine maintenance but does not replace adequate filtration, substrate cleaning or regular partial water changes.
- **API Quick Start:** Introduces nitrifying bacteria that help establish and support the biological filter responsible for processing ammonia and nitrite. It is useful when starting an aquarium, following filter disruption, completing a water change or increasing the biological load.
- **Turtle Neutraliser Block:** Slowly releases calcium to support healthy shell and bone development while helping prevent the water from becoming overly acidic. Use according to the package directions. It should complement—not replace—an appropriate diet, UVB lighting and regular water testing.
- **Live Aquatic Plants:** Provide enrichment, shelter and resting areas while helping absorb some nutrients from the water. Murray River short-necked turtles may also graze on them.

Companionship

Turtles are generally safest when housed individually. Turtles sharing an enclosure may compete for food, heat, UVB exposure and basking space, and aggression can result in serious injuries.

Keeping more than one turtle requires considerably more space, multiple basking and resting areas, and close monitoring. Separate the turtles immediately if chasing, biting, food guarding, persistent hiding or injuries occur.

Handling

Turtles should be handled only when necessary. Support the shell securely with both hands and keep fingers away from the head, as both short-necked and long-necked turtles can bite. Never lift a turtle by its tail, legs or neck.

Diet

Both species must be submerged in water to swallow their food. Juveniles require smaller, more frequent meals, while healthy adults can generally be fed two to three times per week. Adjust portions according to the turtle's species, age, shell size, activity and body condition. Remove uneaten food promptly to protect water quality.

Eastern long-necked turtles: are primarily carnivorous. Offer a varied diet that may include quality turtle pellets, earthworms, crickets, woodies, freshwater snails, whole freshwater fish and Fish Fuel Co.'s specially formulated turtle cube varieties.

Murray River short-necked turtles: are more omnivorous, particularly as they mature. Juveniles generally consume more animal-based foods, while adults should also receive aquatic plants and suitable leafy vegetables alongside quality turtle pellets and Fish Fuel Co.'s specially formulated turtle cubes.

Cleaning

Remove faeces, shed material and uneaten food promptly. Test the water regularly for ammonia, nitrite, nitrate and PH.

Complete a partial water change of approximately 25% as required by the test results. Always treat new tap water with a suitable water conditioner.

Siphon waste from the bottom and around decorations. Rinse filter sponges and reusable biological media in water removed from the aquarium, rather than untreated tap water, to protect beneficial bacteria.

Avoid replacing all filter media at once or thoroughly cleaning the filter on the same day as a major water change. Never use soap, household sprays or scented cleaning products in the enclosure.

Suggested Tanks

Reptile One Turtle Nursery — 60 × 30 × 37 cm

Designed for baby turtles, this enclosure includes a filter, heater, UVB light and floating landing dock. It has a maximum water capacity of 27 litres. The Turtle Nursery is only a temporary juvenile enclosure and will need to be upgraded as the turtle grows.

Reptile One Turtle Eco 90 — 90 × 45 × 50 cm

Provides additional swimming space for a growing juvenile and includes a filtration system designed specifically for turtle enclosures. Its recommended maximum water capacity is 90 litres.

Reptile One Turtle Eco 120 — 120 × 60 × 50 cm

The more appropriate long-term option, with a recommended maximum water capacity of 120 litres. Most adult Australian turtles require an enclosure at least 120 cm long, although a larger aquarium or properly secured outdoor pond may eventually be needed, particularly for a large Murray River short-necked turtle.

Larger enclosures provide more swimming room and make maintaining stable water quality easier.

Quick Reminder

Murray River short-necked and eastern long-necked turtles require a spacious, well-filtered aquatic enclosure, species-appropriate water temperature, a completely dry basking platform and effective UVB lighting.

Provide a varied, species-appropriate diet, maintain excellent water quality and handle only when necessary. Australian native turtles must be obtained legally and must never be taken from or released into the wild.