

## Red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta*)



**ORIGIN:** North America; New Mexico to West Virginia (*elegans*), Virginia to Florida (*scripta*), Virginia to Alabama (*troostii*).

**INTRODUCED TO EUROPE:** 1960

**IMPORTED PATHWAYS AND IMPORTED VECTORS:** Intentionally introduced by the ornamental trade and subsequently repeatedly intentionally released in the wild or in urban areas. Independent spread is low. Import of the subspecies *elegans* into the EU has been banned since 1997. However, all three subspecies are available in the trade (e.g. from offspring) and animals imported earlier are still released.

**MAIN CHARACTERISTICS:** Adults can be 20 to 30 cm long and weigh up to 1.5 kg. The olive green to brown colored dorsal carapace often has yellow lines, the ventral carapace is usually yellow colored with large black spots. The temples are elegantly red in the subspecies and yellow in the other two subspecies.

**BIOLOGY:** Females lay up to 30 eggs per clutch, in our latitudes once a year, in warmer areas several clutches are produced per year. After about five years the animals are sexually mature, they can live up to 40 years. Preference is given to still waters rich in plants or slow-flowing river sections with dense riparian vegetation near settlements and in urban parks. They overwinter under water. On sunny days they are easily observed sunbathing on stones or tree trunks. These undemanding animals feed on amphibian larvae, fish and invertebrates, and aquatic plants.

**STATUS:** Possibly imported to Europe as early as the 19th century, the first releases into the wild probably occurred after World War II. Currently, the species is common in southern Europe, where it reproduces independently and populations are increasing. North of the Alps it occurs as far as England, Ireland and southern Scandinavia, but can only reproduce in Germany in warm locations.