



Video transcript

Turtle housing

Another characteristic about these turtles is that they do surface for air. So, just like all reptiles they need air to breathe. These guys will climb out of the water and sunbake, they breathe air like you and I do or even when they're swimming they'll surface, stick their nose out of the water and take a breath. So, it is important that we do give them an area for them to climb out on so they can have a rest and breathe as well. This is our turtle's home. You can see over here we have a land area so our turtle can climb up if it wants to and dry out and sunbake. And underneath here we have a lamp so the turtle can bask. We also use UV light on our turtles because it's really important for their shell to keep their shells nice and strong. If we don't provide them with UV, their shells will get really soft and go like jelly and they will get Metabolic Bone Disease or Shell Rot or different shell deficiencies and diseases from not providing that. So, we'll have a look at him, we can just let him go and he'll just go off into the water. When you do keep these animals you will find that they spend a lot of time in the water. So, a lot of people think why should I have a landing area for them and that's the reason why, we do need them to dry out. You can provide different logs and heights so that the turtles can hide and feel comfortable underwater. And they'll spend a lot of time there, they'll actually sleep underwater as well so we don't panic. And they will get quite tame so that you don't have to worry about them disappearing and you're never going to see them again, they will come to you. In the first few weeks of setting up they might hide a lot, but as you've got them they will get used to you and they will come over to you. A common thing though, turtles can drown. So, if you notice a turtle in your tank and he's sitting in a weird spot and he's been sitting there for a long time, I don't mind putting my hand in and giving him a little bit of a poke to wake him up. Sometimes they do get stuck and they drown. So, I prefer to wake him up and have him a little bit cranky with me than not having a turtle at all. So, it is a good thing to check. When you're setting up a tank like this, I always look for areas after I've decorated that could be little traps. So, if I think the turtle can get stuck, highly likely it will so I try and avoid making really tight little areas for him just to make it safer for him to move around. If you have a look in our tank we have some pipes running down here which is part of the filtration system. Keeping a turtle is not like keeping other reptiles, it's more like keeping a fish. So, we need to keep really good water quality because that's where they spend most of their time. If we have bad water we'll get sick turtle. So, in this instance we're using a large canister filter which lives underneath our tank, it has pipes that come into the tank, it takes water away, pumps it through different media which is to give us better water quality. We also heat our tank. This tank is set up to around twenty three to twenty four degrees for Eastern Long-necked Turtles. It keeps them busy all year round and it's sort of their current range of temperature. In the wild they do experience lots of colder temperatures but when we have them inside a classroom or in a house or in an office we try and keep them at room temperature or just a little bit above just so that they're busy and they'll constantly eat for us. If you want to have a look down here we have a watermark. There's a large land area. We have lights that go across the top which are reptile globes which emit UV light and we change those every eight to twelve months on our turtles just to ensure they're getting the right lighting source. When it comes to cleaning these guys I like to do ten per cent water changes weekly preferably. But if we don't have time and it can be a bit of a chore at least if we do a third water change every three weeks. And when I do a water change on this, I don't want to take the turtle out, put him in a bucket every time, I don't want to strip all my rocks out because it becomes a lot of work and then we'll stop keeping him. So, what I usually do, I use an aquarium siphon like you would in a normal fish tank and I actually vacuum the gravel to remove any waste. Now, I'll just take ten per cent of the water out, replace it with some fresh water, then I'll put in a water ager, a conditioner to condition the new water

that goes in there. And the turtle's happier, I haven't had to pull him out. I haven't had to dismantle the tank, it's only taken me half an hour, not four hours and dread doing it. So, if I just do small, little bits of maintenance it makes it a lot easier to look after. You'll also find that your tank will stay a lot clearer and a lot cleaner by doing small water changes more frequently than big dump and cleans every few months and it's less labour intensive. There's less chance of us damaging our tank especially when we have big rocks like this, carrying them in and out we do have the risk of breaking things. So, if we can avoid moving these items there's less chance of our animals getting caught in them when we put them back. So, just some general care when we're keeping turtles because they're not like other reptiles, they do live in the water we are prone to different problems. So, sometimes if our water quality's not good our turtles can get blemishes on their skin. So, sometimes they get grey patching on their feet, on their legs, on their necks and the first thing I normally do is check my water quality. So, I check my pH ammonia nitrates just to make sure that the tank is working properly. If that's all good then I look at other things that it could be a fungus or actual skin problem. But nine out of ten times a lot of things that go wrong with our animal generally comes from the water. So, I try and fix the water before I try and fix the animal or the turtle.