



## The Eastern Long-necked Turtle

This is the most commonly seen turtle species in South-eastern Australia.

### Natural distribution



### Physical and behavioural characteristics

- grow to a length of around 25-30 cm
- long live
- mature at around 8 years of age
- will pull their neck into the shell when threatened.

### Environmental requirements for keeping in captivity

- require a reasonably large waterproof enclosure or aquarium
- a body of freshwater and an area of sand or rocks onto which the animal can climb to bask must be provided. Commercially available floating “turtle docks” can also be used
- a water filtration system is essential to provide a clean environment
- a water heater will be required to maintain water temperature around 23°C
- an ultraviolet light source is essential and will need to be replaced annually
- must have direct exposure to UV radiation (not through glass as it filters out the required UV rays).

### Feeding and nutrition

- small whole fish or pieces of larger ones, unpeeled raw prawns, live crickets, yabbies and worms form the basis of the diet
- baby turtles should be fed in a separate enclosure in the tank. Young turtles can be finicky feeders when newly acquired and offering black worms to initiate feeding is recommended
- turtles feed only whilst in water. They may take food on land but need access to water to swallow it.

### Considerations when keeping turtles in schools

- readily available to purchase (\$90-\$120)
- amenable to handling once conditioned but handling is discouraged as dropping can cause shell damage
- most active during the day
- must have exposure to ultraviolet light for 8-9 hours each day. The UV globes must be replaced annually and cost from approximately \$80 - \$120
- enclosures are relatively costly to set up
- out of water basking areas are essential
- water changes must be made regularly – 10% per week is recommended.
- caring for turtles is very similar to caring for a freshwater tropical fish aquarium
- water testing should be performed regularly to ensure that optimum water quality is maintained.

### References

[http://www.davidvella.com.au/TurtleCare2pg\\_dvella.pdf](http://www.davidvella.com.au/TurtleCare2pg_dvella.pdf)

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/Eastern-Snake-necked-Turtle>

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