



## **African Side Neck Turtle Care Sheet**

**Species name:**

*Pelomedusa subrufa*

**Adult size:**

20-30 cm

**Lifespan:**

25-50 Years

**Breeding age:**

3-5 Years



The African side-neck turtle, *Pelomedusa subrufa*, is a freshwater turtle native to Africa and parts of Madagascar. Named for its unique habit of folding its head sideways under its shell rather than retracting it directly, this species thrives in shallow, slow-moving water bodies like ponds and marshes. It has a hardy, omnivorous diet, eating aquatic plants, insects, and small fish. Adapted to warm climates, it can survive in diverse environmental conditions, often burying itself in mud during dry seasons. Side-neck turtles are popular in the pet trade but require specific care to replicate their natural warm, humid habitats.

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## Housing:

**Enclosure:** Turtles are semi-aquatic reptiles meaning they require deep water to swim around in and a dry basking area where they can rest and dry themselves off.

While they are young, a tank 100L+ would be suitable, when they grow older larger tanks measuring around 120 cm long would be ideal.

**Substrate:** Adding a Substrate to your aquarium is purely aesthetic, for ease of maintenance a plain bottom is better. Substrates such as large pebbles, or fine sand will mimic the turtles natural habitat.

## Temperature:

African Side Neck Turtles require a basking spot where they can completely dry themselves off and warm up. This spot should be between 26-35°C. The ambient temperature outside the water should be around 25°C with the temperature dropping down at night to 18-22°C.

The turtles require heated water, standard tropical temperatures around 24-26°C.

## Lighting:

Your Turtle will require access to UVB lighting 10-12 hours a day to ensure their shell stays strong and it also allows them to metabolise essential nutrients. Ensure you are using a 10-12% UVB bulb and replacing it every 6- 8 months.

## Feeding:

**Diet:** These Turtles are omnivores. You could offer them a mix of leafy greens in addition to commercial turtle pellets.

**Feeding Schedule:** Feed juveniles every day, older individuals can be fed every 2-3 days.



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## **Enrichment:**

**Enrichment:** Provide rocks, caves, and artificial plants in your aquarium as enrichment.

It is vital you provide your turtle with a land area which is completely dry to prevent shell rot and allow them to thermoregulate. Typically turtles spend between 30-50% of their time on land basking.

## **Health Care:**

**Health Checks:** Regularly observe your Turtle to see if you notice any changes in behaviour, appetite, or appearance. If something does not seem right seek professional advice promptly.

**Hygiene:** Keep the enclosure clean, removing waste and uneaten food regularly. Perform partial water changes weekly, removing 25% of the water and replacing it with fresh, dechlorinated tap water.

**Quarantine:** Quarantine new Turtles before introducing them to an existing aquarium to prevent the spread of disease.

Turtles make fascinating pets when provided with the right care. Always do thorough research and consult with a veterinarian for specific advice based on your animals' individual needs.