INSIDE FLAP • KEEPER HABITS

4 Keys to Long-Term Health

Small Daily Habits That Prevent 95% of Vet Visits

100% Dry Basking Dock

Your turtle needs to be able to climb completely out of the water under both heat (90–95°F) and UVB so both the top AND bottom of its shell get bone-dry — that's what prevents shell rot!

Shatterproof Heater

Turtles love bulldozing tank decor! Always use a plastic-guarded or titanium submersible water heater so they can't crack a glass heater tube.

Watch Those Back Claws!

Hold your turtle like a hamburger with both hands supporting its belly — they have surprisingly strong back legs and will kick like crazy if they feel like they're falling.

Wash Hands & Skip Kitchen Sink

Always wash your hands with soap after touching turtle water, and dump dirty tank buckets in the bathroom or yard rather than where you wash dishes!

Important African Turtle Note: Unlike local painted turtles or sliders, African Side-Neck Turtles come from warm tropical marshes and **never hibernate!** Keep their water heater running at 76–80°F all winter long.

BACK COVER • TAKE THIS TO THE AISLE

Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

TANK, BASKING DOCK & SAND

- [ ] 40-Gal Breeder (Juvie) or 75–120 Gal Tank / Stock Pond
- [ ] Sturdy Dry Basking Dock / Ramp & Big River Stones
- [ ] Fine River Sand or Bare Bottom (Never Small Fish Gravel!)

HEATER, BIG FILTER & UVB

- [ ] Shatterproof Submersible Heater (78°F) + Water Thermometer
- [ ] Heavy-Duty Filter (Rated 2–3× Tank Volume) + Dechlorinator
- [ ] 75W–100W Splash-Safe Basking Bulb + Ceramic Dome
- [ ] 10.0 / 12% UVB Lamp Positioned Directly Over the Dry Dock

PELLETS, PROTEIN & CALCIUM

- [ ] Floating Aquatic Turtle Pellets (Growth / Maintenance)
- [ ] Frozen Turtle Cubes / Krill + Live Earthworms & Crickets
- [ ] Floating Cuttlebone / Turtle Calcium Block

MY TURTLE'S INFO & FEEDING LOG

Name / Morph: _____

Gotcha Date & Weight: _____

Current Feeder Size & Day: _____

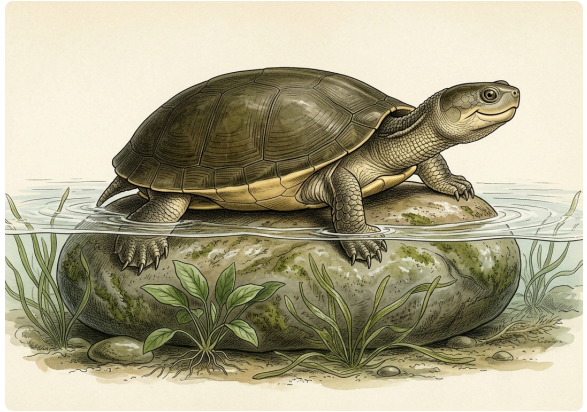
Critter Cabana & Cascade Pet Supply

Questions about heating, shedding, or a picky eater? Stop by or call our reptile team anytime — we're here for the full 25–40+ year commitment!

CRITTER CABANA & CASCADE PET SUPPLY • CARE GUIDE

African Side-Neck Turtle

Pelomedusa subrufa & Pelusios castaneus



The Quick Version: Instead of pulling their head straight back into their shell, Side-Neck Turtles fold their neck sideways under the rim — and they always look like they're smiling at you! They're super personable, begging at the glass like water puppies.

QUICK VITAL STATS AT-A-GLANCE

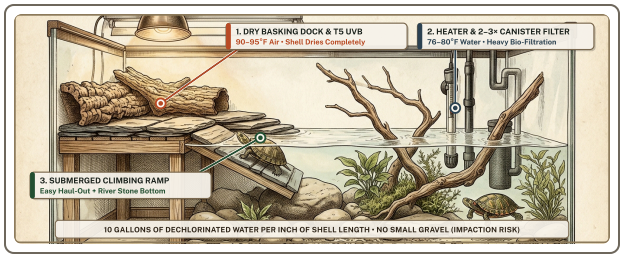
LIFESPAN **25–40+ Years**	ADULT SIZE **7–10 Inches**
ACTIVE HOURS **Daytime (Diurnal)**	ADULT TANK **40B / 50G Low-Boy+**
WATER TEMP **76°–80°F Heated**	

OPEN FOR TANK SETUP, TEMPS, FEEDING & SHOPPING LIST →

STEP 1 • HABITAT & CLIMATE

Warm Swimming Water + Bone-Dry Basking Dock

Two Things Keep Shells Healthy: Strong UVB + Drying Off 100% on the Dock!



Dry Basking Dock Air — 90°–95°F
Put both heat bulb AND UVB right over the dry ramp!

Heated Swimming Water — 76°–80°F
Use a shatterproof submersible heater 24/7

UVB Over Basking Dock — Strong UVB
10.0 / 12% UVB (Glass blocks UV — never shine through glass!)

Oversized Filtration — 2–3× Volume
Turtles are messy! Pick a filter rated 2–3× your tank size

Water Conditioner — 0% Chlorine
Always dechlorinate tap water during water changes

Thermostat & Gauge Rule: Stick-on dial gauges can be off by 10°F+! Use a digital probe thermometer/hygrometer and always plug heating mats and heat emitters into a **digital thermostat**.

STEP 2 • STOCKED STORE OPTIONS

Two Ways That Work

Pick Option A or Option B Based on Your Home Setup

Tank Style: Wide Breeder / Low-Boy Tank vs. Oval Tub

Side-Neck Turtles are active bottom-walkers and swimmers that care way more about floor space than deep water:

OPTION A: 40-GAL BREEDER OR 50-GAL LOW-BOY GLASS TANK (OUR TOP PICK!)
Great for watching them swim up to greet you! Pair with a floating basking dock or stacked flat river stone island.

OPTION B: HEAVY-DUTY 40+ GAL OVAL STOCK TANK LAGOON
Molded oval tubs make awesome, indestructible turtle lagoons with tons of floor space and easy overhead lamp clamping.

Bottom Flooring: Bare Glass vs. Fine River Sand

Big No-No: never use small colorful fish gravel — turtles eat pebbles and get fatal gut blockages!

OPTION A: BARE BOTTOM + SMOOTH RIVER BOULDERS
Super easy to vacuum clean during weekly water changes, with big stones (larger than their head) for gripping.

OPTION B: FINE AQUARIUM / RIVER SAND
Side-Necks love burying themselves in fine sand on the bottom, and fine sand passes safely if they swallow a few grains.

Keeping the Water Clean

Real talk: one turtle makes about 3× as much waste as a fish of the same size!

OPTION A: CANISTER FILTER RATED 2–3× YOUR TANK GALLON SIZE
On a 75-gallon tank, run a filter rated for 150–200 gallons and do a quick 25–30% water change once a week.

OPTION B: FEED MESSY MEALS IN A SEPARATE TUB
Feeding worms, krill, and pellets in a separate plastic tub of warm dechlorinated water keeps your main tank crystal clear way longer!

STEP 3 • DIET & NUTRITION

What to Feed (Remember: They Can Only Swallow Underwater!)

Portion Trick: Feed Only Enough Pellets to Fit Inside Your Turtle's Head (Not the Shell!)

Juveniles — Feed Daily
Floating Pellets + Protein Daily: A head-sized portion of quality turtle pellets plus earthworms, crickets, roaches, or thawed krill/bloodworms.

Adults — Every 2–3 Days
Pellets, Bugs/Worms & Floating Greens: Feed pellets and lean protein (worms, roaches, snails) 3×/week, plus floating romaine, dandelion leaves, or duckweed.

Shell Calcium — 24/7 in Tank
Floating Cuttlebone: Toss a piece of natural cuttlebone right in the water — they'll crunch on it whenever they need calcium for their shell!

Favorite Turtle Foods We Carry:

- **Floating Turtle Pellets:** Balanced growth & maintenance formulas
- **Worms, Roaches & Krill:** Nightcrawlers, Dubia roaches, frozen turtle cubes
- **Floating Greens & Plants:** Dandelion, red leaf lettuce, duckweed, hornwort
- **Cuttlebone & Calcium Blocks:** Keeps shells hard and prevents peeling scutes

First-Week Rule: Give your new African Side-Neck Turtle **5 to 7 days of peace and quiet** in its new tank before handling or offering its very first meal so it can map out its hides and feel safe!