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TORTOISES AND TURTLES

Eastern Snake-necked Turtle

Chelodina longicollis

Chelodina longicollis is a medium-sized, carnivorous freshwater turtle from south-eastern Australia. The neck is so long that it reaches about 60 % of the shell length, and the animal catches its prey with a lightning-fast strike from the bottom. Females grow to 28 cm. The species needs a large, deep and clean tank with a basking spot, and it is an animal to watch, not to pick up.

Family: Chelidae Former name: *Chelodina novaehollandiae*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**18-28 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**450-820 g**
Lifespan	**30-50 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**150 × 75 × 65 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Basking spot	**30-34 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 35-40 cm
Water temperature	**22-25 °C**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**84-144 months**
Clutch size	**6-24 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**110-185 days** at 26-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Not Evaluated (NE)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Keep *Chelodina longicollis* in an aquarium or tub, not in an ordinary terrarium. The species is a bottom-dwelling swimmer and needs depth more than basking space.
TEMPERATURE	The water should be 22-25 °C. The temperature is maintained with a thermostat-controlled water heater, and measurements are taken both in and above the water.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The turtle's moisture is the water, so air humidity is not decisive; 50-80 % in the room is sufficient. What matters is clean water. Change about a quarter to a third of the water every week, and remove food remains after the meal.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water is the animal's home. For adults it should be 35-40 cm deep (at least twice as deep as the shell is wide), well oxygenated, clean and 22-25 °C.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and depends on UV light for its bones. It spends less time at the basking spot than *Trachemys scripta*, but UVB is still necessary.
FEEDING	*Chelodina longicollis* is a carnivore. The food must be animal-based and varied: earthworms, bloodworms and blackworms, crickets and other insects, small fish such as guppies, shrimp, krill, mussels and snails.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Chelodina longicollis* is an animal for observation. It is not social and lives alone in the wild, and in a tank fights often arise between two animals, because the dominant one grows faster. Keep one animal.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.