

Yellow-bellied slider & Red-eared slider species

Trachemys scripta

Invasive: Medium impact

Species profile

- Habitat:** Freshwater.
- Distribution in Ireland:** Few records of these species, most from ponds in parks.
- Status:** Not established.
- Family name:** Emydidae.
- Reproduction:** Mating takes place in water although a sufficient terrestrial habitat is required to lay eggs. Multiple eggs may be laid and the offspring are generally carnivorous.

Identifying features

- Colour:** The skin and shell are of a similar colour, brown to olive green coupled with yellow stripes and blotches.
- Shell:** Head can be retracted into the shell as a defensive mechanism.
- Markings:** The red-eared slider has a long red marking/blotch which runs from behind the eye to the top of the neck. The yellow-bellied slider has a yellow blotch.
- Plastron:** Yellow underside generally with unique markings/blotches.



Red eared slider (top) and 3 yellow-bellied sliders, showing various markings - Shay Connolly



Red-eared slider with head retracting into its shell (carapace) - Shutterstock



Red-eared slider, showing its characteristic red marking at the ear - GBNNS Crown Copyright 2009



Threats

As the species matures it become more omnivorous, they predominately eat plants but also have the ability to predate on chicks and fish. This could impact upon Ireland's native biodiversity.

Sliders emerging from rivers or basking on river banks may damage ground nesting birds eggs.

Common as pets which increases the likelihood of further releases into the wild.

Considered a potential vector of salmonella.

Similar species

Red eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) was the most commonly sold slider species until a European ban in 1997. Since then the Yellow-bellied slider (*Trachemys scripta scripta*) is the most commonly pet traded slider. Due to this and as they are long-lived species, it is likely that most sliders seen will be one of these two species. While there are no similar native species in Ireland, They may be confused with other non-native terrapins. The Common snapper (*Chelydra serpentina*) also been recorded in the wild but it does not have the yellow markings.



The common snapper is similar to slider species except it lacks distinctive yellow markings - Fintan Ryan



Yellow bellied slider showing yellow plastron with distinctive dark blotches - Dan Minchin