

By ~~Stefan 2017~~ Stefan 2017, Science Editor

[Meet a Strange Double-Headed Turtle](#)

From Florida

Two-headed reptiles appear from time to time. But this two-headed turtle discovered by a turtle collector is an extremely rare example of a conjoined-twin birth. "The turtle would have likely died in the wild because it swims awkwardly and would be an easy target for predators," said Jay Jacoby, manager of Big Al's Aquarium Supercenter in East Norriton. "The store bought the tiny turtle from the collector for an undisclosed price and will keep it on display", he said. The 2-month-old juvenile from the species red-eared slider is as big as a silver dollar and its two heads emerge from the two opposite ends of its shell, together with a pair of front feet on each side, while the individual has only one pair of back feet and one tail. "The turtle is seemingly healthy, and the species can live 15 to 20 years", said Jacoby, who did not find yet a name for the animal. "The same exotic-turtle collector sold another Big Al's store a conjoined-twin turtle about 20 years ago," said Jacoby said. The man is a Fort Lauderdale (Florida) resident, but he declined to make public his identify. "It's not some kind of genetic experiment or reptile that grew up downstream from a nuclear power plant. It's just one of those rare, one-in-a-million freaks of nature. The two heads seem to have their own thoughts, operating independently. But sometimes they seem to put their two heads together and move in the same direction, feed together, walk together", said Jay Jacobi, the store's exotic reptile manager. The red ear slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) is a semi-aquatic turtle (terrapin) native and common in the southern United States, being also very popular in pet trade, from United States and Canada to Europe. In fact, escaped individuals established in southern Europe where they are a threat for the two local turtle species.