



GEORGIAN BAY
BIOSPHERE RESERVE

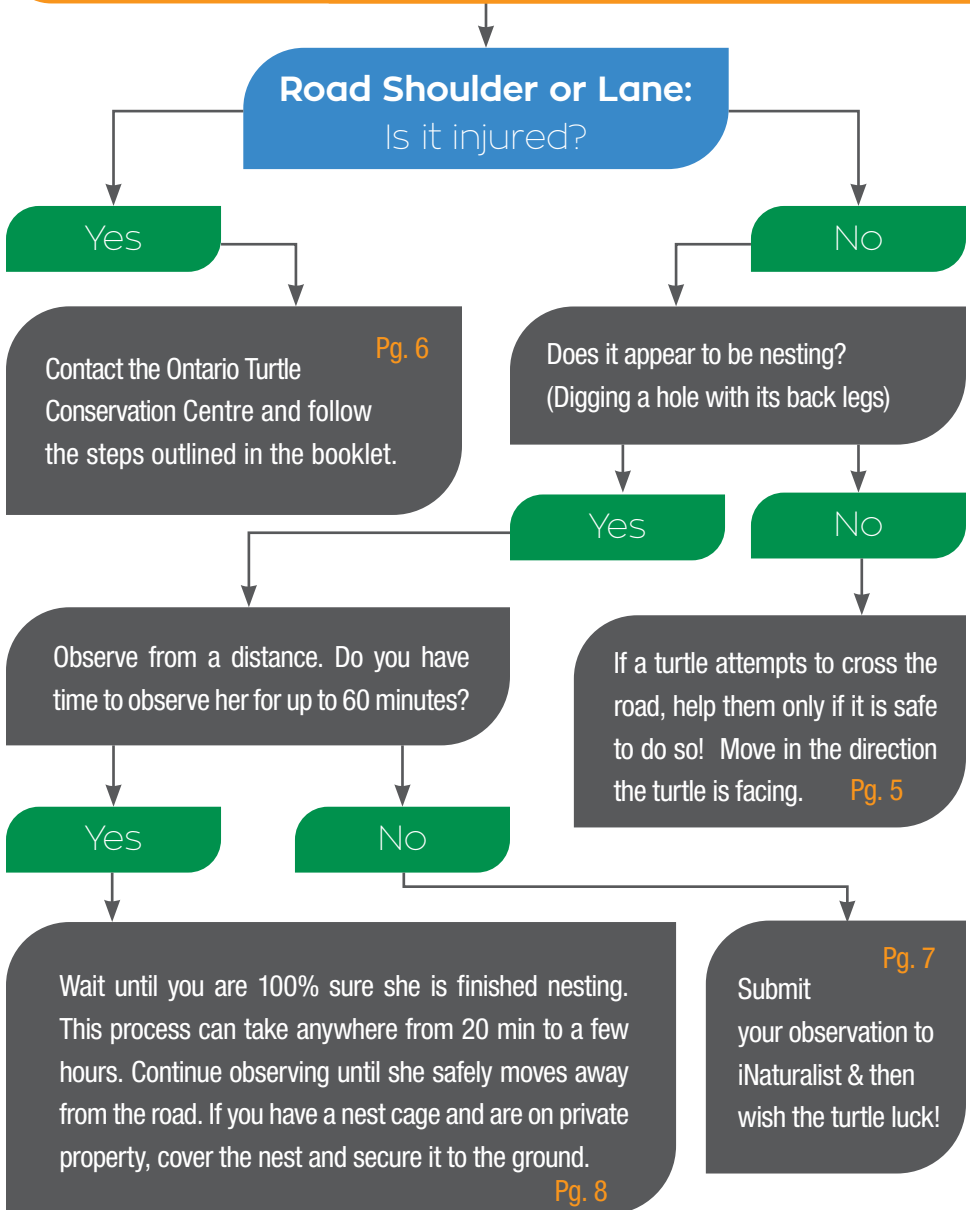
What To Do With... Turtles On Roads



REPORTING & HANDLING GUIDE

I Found A Turtle!

Where did



Now What?

you find it?

Wetland or
Lawn or
Garden

Don't touch
the turtle!

If it is not in immediate danger, just leave it be! It may be a female looking for nesting grounds or a male moving between wetlands. Turtles are surprisingly terrestrial! Submit sighting to iNaturalist **Pg. 7**

Yes

If a turtle attempts to cross the road, help them only if it is safe to do so! Move in the direction the turtle is facing. **Pg. 5**

Road Ditch:
Is it injured?

Yes

Contact the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre and follow the steps outlined in the booklet. **Pg. 6**

No

Don't touch the turtle!
Do you have time to observe the turtle to see if it attempts to cross the road?

No

Submit your observation to iNaturalist and then wish the turtle luck! **Pg. 7**

Who Did You Find?

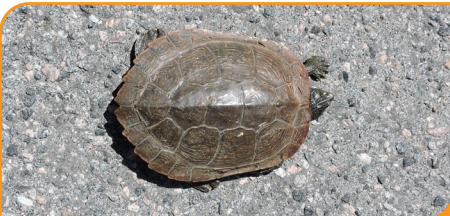
The most common turtle species found on roads in the Parry Sound & Muskoka Districts include:



Blanding's Turtle

Blanding o m'sheekehnmon

- Bright yellow on chin and throat.
- Domed shell that resembles an “army helmet”.
- Lays 6-11 oval, dull white, hard-shelled eggs.
- **Threatened**



Northern Map Turtle

Keewatino okimazinigan

- Fine yellow lines on olive green to brownish shell, resembling a map.
- Slight raised area down centre of shell.
- Yellow spot behind each eye.
- Lays 10-16 oblong, parchment-shelled eggs.
- **Special Concern**



Snapping Turtle

Miskwadeseehn dehkunget

- Large head, two barbels on neck.
- Tail is same length or longer than carapace.
- Could be described as “dinosaur-like” or most “prehistoric” looking.
- Only aggressive when threatened on land.
- Will swim away from danger and people when in the water.
- Lays 20-40 round, ping-pong ball-like eggs.
- **Special Concern**



Midland Painted Turtle

Nahwi kumik zsheshobeegauzod

- Olive to brownish-grey carapace with orange-red margins.
- Neck, legs & tail striped with red & yellow.
- Males have very long nails on front feet.
- Lays 3-14 oval, white, smooth-shelled eggs.
- **Special Concern**

Proper Turtle Handling

Do:

- ✔ Use both hands, positioned firmly at the side of the turtle.
- ✔ For snapping turtles, position hands at rear of shell.
For larger snapping turtles, position one hand at the rear of the shell and the other underneath the turtle.
- ✔ Expect the turtle to hiss and/or scratch your hands.
- ✔ Expect the turtle to possibly urinate.
- ✔ Always be aware of the turtle's head.

If you are uncomfortable lifting a snapping turtle, use a car mat or shovel to help move the turtle without using your hands.



Do Not:

- ✘ Tap on the shell or knock it.
- ✘ Pick up a turtle that you are not comfortable holding.
- ✘ Pick up by tail.



What to do When you Find an Injured Turtle

1. Carefully place the injured turtle in a dry, well ventilated plastic container with a secure lid because turtles can climb.
2. DO NOT transport turtles in water or offer food.
3. Wash or sanitize your hands after handling the animal.
4. Complete one Injured Turtle Report Card from this booklet.

Please tape this securely to the container. Be sure to not cover any ventilation holes. Accurate location information ensures the turtle can be released back to the same location.

5. Call the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre (OTCC) at 705-741-5000, they are a turtle hospital!

If the OTCC is not open, please leave a message and follow instructions on the answering machine.

**Learn more about
the OTCC at:
ontarioturtle.ca**



How to Help an Uninjured Turtle Cross The Road

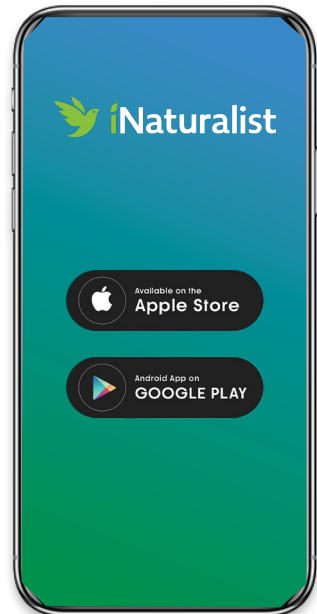
1. Always be aware of road traffic. Only attempt to help the turtle if it is safe to do so and you feel comfortable handling it.
2. Do NOT remove a turtle from the area you found it in. Turtles rely on the ponds and wetlands they are familiar with.
3. Move the turtle in the direction it was going/is facing.

Grip the edge of the shell at the hind legs and raise the back end. Quickly slide your other hand between its back legs to its stomach to support the turtle from its lower shell, then lift.
4. Always wash your hands after handling a turtle!



Join the Georgian Bay Biosphere project on iNaturalist to report your turtle and other species sightings!

This free citizen science app is downloadable in the AppStore or online at [iNaturalist.ca](https://www.inaturalist.ca)



Nesting Turtles

When you find a nesting turtle on a roadway:

1. If safe to do so, pull over.
2. Keep your distance to avoid spooking the turtle (at least 2 car lengths away).
3. Call the Saving Turtles at Risk Today (START) Project hotline (705-955-4284) to report your observation if the turtle is NOT a Painted Turtle or Snapping Turtle. Depending on the species and location of the nest, a team may be deployed to excavate nests laid in precarious areas (such as roadsides where nest protectors are unsafe to place).
4. Wait until turtle has stopped nesting and is walking away. Once turtle covers the nest, make sure it has gotten off the road safely.



For instructions
build a nest p
cwf-fcf.org/en/



ons on how to
rotector, visit:
xplore/turtles

When you find a nesting
turtle on private property:

1. Keep your distance to avoid spooking the turtle (at least 2 car lengths away).
2. Mark where the turtle has laid its nest to ensure you avoid walking/driving on that area. You can install your own nesting cage (such as on your lawn or side of driveway).
3. Call the Saving Turtles at Risk Today (START) Project hotline (705-955-4284) to report your observation and depending on the species and location of the nest, a team may be deployed to excavate nests laid in precarious areas (such as roadsides where nest protectors are unsafe to place).



Other Ways To Keep Turtles Safe:

Turtles are not as good as pets as you might think! They require as much attention as a dog or cat, and will often outlive their owners. Being a responsible pet owner can greatly impact our native turtles.

- Never take a wild turtle home as a pet, this is illegal and damaging to native populations.

- Never purchase a turtle that is native to Ontario. It was likely taken from the wild illegally. If you see native turtles being sold online, report the seller to the Conservation Officer TIPS LINE 1-877-TIPS-MNR.

- Never release a pet turtle into the wild, do your best to rehome them. Captive turtles can introduce diseases to wild populations and may become an invasive problem.

- Keep your pets on a leash! Dogs can often see turtles as toys. Keeping them on a leash will ensure the safety of both your dog and the turtle.

Ontario turtle populations are still under threat from poachers.

- If you see someone acting suspiciously or in an unusual location (for example a person in a wetland holding a bag) call the Conservation Officer TIPS LINE 1-877-TIPS-MNR.

- People love turtle photos, but do not share exact locations of your turtle sightings on social media. Only give coordinates to a researcher or people you trust.

**If you run out of Injured Turtle Report Cards,
please contact the Biosphere for more.**

Photo Credits: Tianna Burke, Gord Darlington, Sean Boyle, Alanna Smolarz, S.T.A.R.T Program, Kelsey Marchand, Robin Lloyd



Use these Injured Turtle Report Cards when you find an injured turtle that will be delivered to the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre.

Call (705-741-5000) when you find an injured turtle.



GEORGIAN BAY BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve (GBBR) is a non-profit registered Canadian charity. We are a community-based organization that works with partners in our region to protect the environment, create vibrant communities, and support a healthy economy by building capacity through education and culture.

This resource was made with support from the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada.



This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de:



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

Learn more at gbbbr.ca