



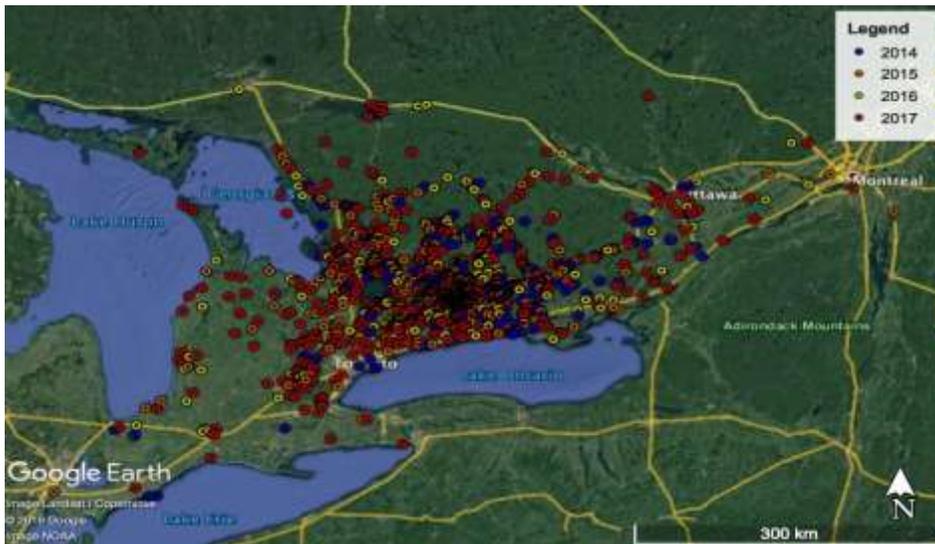
## *“Saving the heart of Ontario’s wetlands”*

May, 2018

Dear Friends,

### **It’s time for them to go home!!**

With the help of many hundreds of good samaritans, such as YOU, 921 turtles came to our hospital for care in 2017. While many hundreds were released last summer, 750 overwintered with us and are now ready to go home...and home can be anywhere in Ontario! Releasing them requires a lot of people-power, as each location has to be scouted out and must be near where they or their mother was found.



location of turtle admissions

### **Here are a few of the stories of those that are going home...**



Dubbed “Chill”, this big guy was a late addition, coming to us in the winter, after becoming stuck in the ice after a warm spell. He was seen there by a family, who thought it was a log in the ice – for 3 days! Not surprisingly, he needed some nursing back to health, but is feisty and eating great now, and will go home as soon as the weather allows. Had it not been for that family, this ancient and vital member of the turtle population, would have been lost.

Why did we have so many admissions last year? While roads are always a large cause of turtle mortality, it is likely that YOU are what made it possible for so many to get help. Increased public awareness and engagement was key. While we had a wet May, the rest of the season had no greater rainfall than other years. Our admission numbers were increased during each month, so the rain was unlikely the issue!



This handsome fellow was one of our first cases in 2017, and he had one of the worst car injuries of the season. Turtles have an absolutely amazing ability to heal, however, and after 12 months of excellent nursing, he is now fully mobile, bright and snappy, and ready to go home! Over time, his scar will become barely noticeable.



We released 1400 hatchlings at the end of the summer in 2017, and overwintered many hundreds more. They are hatched from eggs retrieved from injured or deceased turtles admitted to our hospital, and would have been lost to the population. Above left is a map turtle baby, and above right is a clutch of painted turtles. We have hatched 6 of the eight species! All babies will be released into their mother's wetland, after the "headstart" in life they have been given.

**All eight of Ontario's eight species of turtles, are now listed as Species At Risk.** (The Painted Turtle was recently added, due to the extensive road mortality they endure). Road mortality is second only to habitat loss as a cause for turtle declines. Unlike other species of wildlife, turtles cannot tolerate or compensate for any extra mortality in their adult population – they take so long to mature, and so few make it to adulthood, that they rely on a very long life and very low adult mortality to keep populations healthy. Every adult is vital! While prevention of turtle road mortalities with ecopassages remains the "Gold Standard" for fixing the problem, the number of turtles that we treat and release in our hospital, helps to reverse some of the loss, and buys time to 'fix' the problem.

We already have had a large number of cases admitted to our hospital this month, and it has only just begun! **We have taken on another 1,000 square feet of space in our mall**, to act as an expanded ICU, to ensure we are able to house them all.

**This was made possible by a generous bequest by Gail Grace Christie**; we are sincerely grateful to Gail and her family; this has enabled us to increase our resources in readiness for the large number of turtle cases we expect. We wouldn't be able to carry out our essential conservation programs, without the generosity of people such as Gail.

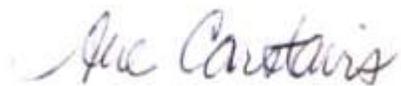
**Please help us to ensure the very highest quality of care for all our hospital patients...**

- **\$250 buys one bottle of pain medication (all turtles receive this)**
- **\$200 buys a viral lab screen for one turtle**
- **\$150 buys bandage materials for one week**
- **\$100 buys half a day of nursing care**

As a Registered Charity, we rely on donations from the public, such as you to provide care to our patients. In addition, our multipronged approach to conservation includes education, which is vital for ensuring other causes for declines are addressed, such as poaching, fishing bycatch, and habitat loss. Our field work also is critical, in providing knowledge about "Headstarting" and how to maximize "success" with this.

**Thank you for helping us ensure that the 'heart of our wetlands' survives**

With Sincere Thanks,



Dr. Sue Carstairs

**Executive and Medical Director,**

**Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre**

Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre is the operating name of the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre; Charity Number 857524409)