

# TURTLE TIMES



Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre\*



Spring, 2019

## Message from the Executive and Medical Director

By Dr. Sue Carstairs

People always ask me “what do you do in the ‘off-season’?... you must have lots of time on your hands!”

At OTCC, we are busy all year round! While the spring and summer time is the busy time for admissions (945 last year!) the rest of the year is just as busy, but in different areas. We have over 800 turtles in the building to care for, for one thing – each one needs oversight, and some need continued care, to ensure they are ready for release in the spring. We have an army of volunteers who help us, thank goodness (over 5,000 volunteer hours last year, just to help with the feeding and cleaning!). All the turtles have to be microchipped, and have their final xrays, blood work, etc, and make sure they are fully able to survive back in the wild. We then have to map out their ‘home’ area, so that they can be released back to their original location (the closest appropriate body of water to where they were found). ... But releasing these wild turtles back to their homes, is only part of our important conservation work.

Winter is also a time to put our data to work, to help turtle conservation as a whole.

This involves writing scientific papers for publication. Our post-release headstarting studies have recently been accepted for publication in the journal *Animal Conservation*. This paper is entitled “**Population reinforcement accelerates subadult recruitment rates in an endangered freshwater turtle**”; by Sue Carstairs, James Paterson, Kirsta Jager, Donnell Gasbarrini, Amy Mui and Christina Davy. We collaborated with amazing scientists from Trent, MNRF, and Dalhousie, to analyze and present our field data. Another paper derived from our field studies is currently under review.

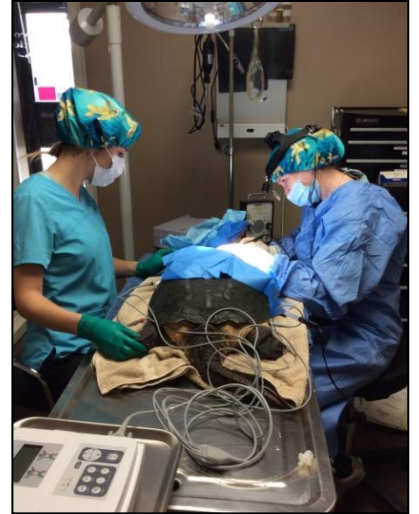


We also had a paper accepted in *Canadian Field Naturalist* and entitled “**Revisiting the hypothesis of sex-biased turtle road mortality**”, written by Sue Carstairs, Marc Dupuis-Desormeaux, and Christina Davy. Marc is a PhD whose specialty is human-wildlife conflict, and he does turtle conservation work for the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority. Christina is the species-at-risk research scientist for the MNRF. Their collaboration made this a very strong paper, and they both contributed a great deal.

We have another paper currently under review, presenting our results in testing admissions to our hospital for ‘Ranavirus’, which is an emerging threat to cold-blooded animals globally. This is very important to monitor, and could have far reaching affects on our turtle populations.

The winter is the time to plan our fundraising for the year, after all, we cannot carry out our vital work without the funds with which to do it!

**I thank all our supporters – without you, our work would not be possible.** Thank you for your donations of time, materials, and of course that vital financial support. Each of our programs is moving conservation forward, and we can only carry them out with this financial support. Again, thank you!



Amanda Klack-Vet Tech (left),  
assists Dr. Sue Carstairs



*\*Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre” is the legal operating name of the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre*  
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Registered Charity # 85752 4409RR0001

## News from our Education Coordinator

By Wendy Baggs, Education Coordinator



The Education Program is well into full swing for 2019 with bookings already into August! We've been busy planning and developing exciting new activities for eager participants. It is important that we continually keep workshops exciting by implementing activities that foster stewardship. We strive to make our programs engaging and fun for people of all ages, with a variety of different program options to choose from.

March Break is fast approaching and this is always a busy time for the program. Our offering of pre-booked private tours over the time period of February 11-16 has always been well received.

Our winter Jan. 26 Open House, aptly named "Turtlelude" was a huge success!! In 3 short but exhilarating hours, 503 smiling faces crossed the threshold of the OTCC!! Children showed their artistic talent in the kiddies zone and winners were randomly drawn from ages 3-6 and 6-12 .

The gift shop was a hub of busy shoppers, eager to purchase the latest turtle bling and OTCC clothing. There was something for everyone! Our live, ambassador turtles as always take centre stage and were the main attraction for many. Call me to see how our education program can fit into your next event!

### New to our Education Program!

2019 will see the "birth" of **Birthday Parties** hosted by the OTCC!! Why be predictable when you can make it memorable!! Plan a party that has a twist...a party that combines nature and learning! Whether you book an off-site or on-site workshop, a private tour or a birthday party, our events entitle you to a fun, unique and exciting way to learn about turtles!!



To book an event or for more info: [education@ontarioturtle.ca](mailto:education@ontarioturtle.ca)

## Notes From the Field

By Donnell Gasbarrini, Turtle Programs Manager

With spring quickly approaching, we are working hard to get ready for another busy summer season in the field! Our off-site work is conducted in Ontario's pristine wetlands. In order to do this, we must obtain three separate formal permissions, one from each of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry (OMNRF), the provincial Animal Care Committee, and Ontario Parks. Each of these have unique requirements, which usually includes a report on the findings from the previous year and the intentions for the coming year. Only work that is worthwhile and that will contribute to the understanding of the target species are approved. The OTCC has been running this field project since 2012, which is a great testament to the value of the work being done!



We will have a team of 4 emerging biologists on our "Field Crew" this year, who will either be current students or recent graduates, and they will be led by our Turtle Programs Manager. Their main goal will be to continue to monitor juvenile Blanding's turtles, some of which hatched and were reared at the OTCC at the beginning of their lives! We are tracking these turtles from May to October to gain a better understanding of their use of natural habitats, their growth rates, and their overall survival abilities after getting a "headstart" in life at the OTCC. We are excited to see where these turtles will move during the spring, summer, and fall seasons, as they are starting to take longer treks through wetlands and over land that are characteristic of adult Blanding's turtles.

While at the field site, our team will also document other animals and plants and report these to the OMNRF so that this information can be used for management plans for this area. With our team being present on the ground 5 days per week, we have more eyes on the ground (and in the water and the sky!) than anyone else. The 2018 field season was very successful, and we are looking forward to another great field season in 2019!



## Volunteer Spotlight!

### John Cookson & Elizabeth Kitchen

By Diana Morrison, Administrator

At 84, John is our oldest volunteer! He was a Correctional Officer and then Operations Manager at Ottawa Detention Centre before retiring in 1995. He moved to the Peterborough area in 2000 and started volunteering at LAWS in 2003, where he worked with his wife taking care of cats. It was a tough job as many of the cats were feral and needed careful handling. A pet peeve of his: he finds it difficult to comprehend irresponsible owners who let their cats run wild, or people who move and leave their cats behind. John will be celebrating 60 years of marriage in May, to Dorothy! He likes working here, likes the people and as to turtles, he didn't realize so many are endangered. He has met some nice people here and especially admires our student volunteers' dedication, who not only spend time here but also work and go to school.



Elizabeth Kitchen is John's daughter and she and John feed on Thursdays. She has always volunteered in some capacity and suggested to her dad that they work here together. She is a retired Financial Planner who likes to run the local trails. She lives with partner Allan and her parents, and has 3 children, one in New York, one in Toronto, and one in Langley, BC. As a certified Financial Planner, Elizabeth suggested to us an alternative way of the procuring donations other than cash. She was our first donor of securities (stock) and in fact, helped us get set up for this purpose (see pg 9). She says it enables her to give more to charities because of the tax savings advantage for her, and is willing to speak to anyone who is interested in donating in this manner. Elizabeth supports children & animal charities because she feels these groups are some of the most vulnerable.

*Thank you John and Elizabeth!*

## Upcoming Events

### The OTCC Annual Charity Golf Tournament

*Saturday, May 25 at Heron Landing Golf Club, starting at 1:00 pm —double crossover start!*

We hope you'll join us! For more information on the tournament, please visit our website: <https://ontarioturtle.ca/event/otcc-charity-golf-tournament/>. We're also looking for hole sponsors and items for our silent auction or prize table. If you can help out, please contact Amanda at [turtletaxi@ontarioturtle.ca](mailto:turtletaxi@ontarioturtle.ca).



### Twilight Turtle Gathering

### Get out of the Rat Race...join the Turtle Pace!

*Thursday July 11, from 5-8 pm*

You are cordially invited to join us for a champagne reception at the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre in our beautiful outdoor education area. There will be a glass of champagne waiting for you, as you slip into the 'turtle pace'. We will have hors d'oeuvres, a fantastic silent auction, door prizes, a 50/50 draws, and more. Explore our pathways and turtle ponds, tour our indoor facility and hospital, peruse our large merchandise selection in the gift shop, and of course meet Paddy! You can also meet our human ambassadors; our board members, staff and volunteers. We will have a cash bar for those who do not like bubbly, along with a Green Bog punch (non-alcoholic). Admission is \$20, and all proceeds go directly to the care of the turtles at our centre.



*Help us to help turtles and Save the Heart of Ontario's Wetlands.*



## Different Ways to Donate!



**GIFT SHOP:** Our gift shop features some unique items, not always available online. Visit us at 4-1434 Chemong Rd., Selwyn to shop in person, or shop online at [www.ontarioturtle.ca](http://www.ontarioturtle.ca)!

### SAVE TURTLES AND TAXES BY DONATING SECURITIES TO OTCC

A donation of publicly traded securities such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds and segregated funds to OTCC may provide you with significant tax benefits, while conserving at-risk turtle populations.

When you transfer securities that are listed on a public stock exchange directly to OTCC you may not pay tax on capital gains. This may provide you with a tax saving of up to 50 percent and may be a greater tax savings than donating the cash proceeds from the sale of the securities. Donors also qualify for a charitable tax receipt based on the asset's fair market value. It's easy to give the gift of securities. Contact OTCC for more information and a transfer form at [info@ontarioturtle.ca](mailto:info@ontarioturtle.ca) or 705-741-5000.

**DONATE:** your financial contributions mean we can continue with our work. Donate in person by cash, cheque, debit or credit card, or donate online at [www.ontarioturtle.ca](http://www.ontarioturtle.ca). We appreciate your support and partnership in the effort to save Ontario's turtles!

**RIGHTCYCLE:** Since enrolling in Kimberly Clark's recycle program, we have recycled over 300 pounds of disposable gloves that protect us and the turtles from the spread of infection and disease. As a conservation organization, we don't want to contribute to the problem of excessive waste in our landfills, or the garbage that finds its way into our ecosystems. We're thankful for the people who have volunteered to sponsor this program! If five more people were to contribute \$5.00 per month, the expense of this would be fully covered. If interested in helping with this program, please visit our website and click the donate button, where you'll have the option to give monthly, either by credit card or via your PayPal account.



## OTCC and the Community



A big shout out to the **BREALEY DRIVE ANIMAL CLINIC** in Peterborough! They donated the proceeds of nail trims for the months of January and February, to the OTCC ... nearly \$1000.00!

*Thank you Brealey Drive Animal Clinic!*

**THE FROST STUDENT ASSOCIATION**, at the Fleming College Frost Campus in Lindsay is once again sponsoring a 5k run and donating the proceeds to the OTCC! In 2017 this event raised nearly \$200.00! If you are interested in participating or want to sponsor a runner, please contact Kieran Murphy at [FSAFinanceDirector@flemingcollege.ca](mailto:FSAFinanceDirector@flemingcollege.ca), or by phone at (519) 588-0582.

*Thank you Frost Student Association!*



**KAWARTHA LAKES CONSTRUCTION** ran a "Turtle Saving Challenge 2018" with their staff as part of their "30 Acts for 30 Years" campaign, to help celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This resulted in a donation of \$500 to the OTCC! Not only that, but Kawartha Lakes Construction went a step further and had t-shirts and bumper stickers made up. The entire staff got in on the challenge, saving over 30 turtles and even handed out awards to the "greatest turtle savers". One of their employees who helped/saved the most turtles actually commented that he never noticed them on the roads before or paid attention. Now he's like a hawk...every piece of litter or random rock he thinks are turtles in need of helping! What a great challenge to other businesses...

*Thank you Kawartha Lakes Construction!*



## The Hatchling Hub

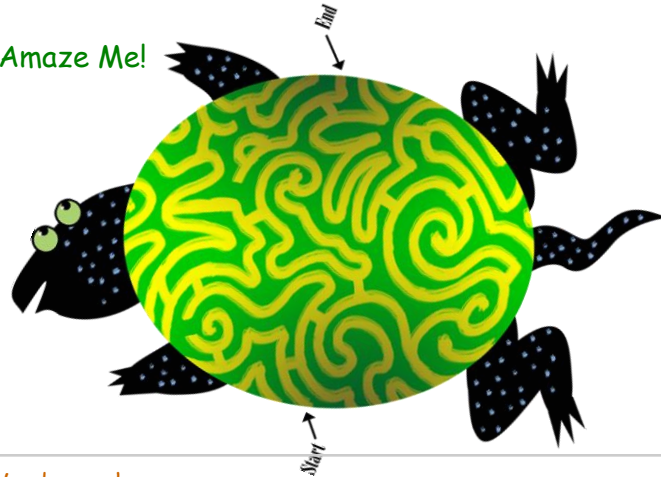
*Ontario's turtles* are omnivores – they eat plants and animals but they do not have teeth. A turtle's shell is made up of bone. Turtles in Ontario hibernate in the winter. The painted turtle is our most common turtle. Western painted turtles can be found Northern Ontario, near Manitoba and are bigger than Midland painted turtles, which have red on their skin and shells, and are common to the rest of Ontario. **What type of painted turtle is pictured here?**



### WORD SEARCH

D	B	A	S	K	I	N	G	C	P
N	D	Y	D	E	T	N	I	A	P
X	J	S	Z	C	V	S	U	O	A
E	K	H	X	L	R	E	R	L	E
D	N	E	J	U	D	K	E	E	L
N	X	L	D	T	G	B	F	Y	I
O	F	L	N	C	V	T	A	J	T
P	H	F	K	H	I	C	F	R	P
N	C	A	R	R	I	O	N	B	E
C	P	E	G	G	S	N	K	O	R

Amaze Me!



### Turtlely Funny...

1. What kind of jokes to turtles tell?
2. What did the cow say to the turtle?
3. Why did the turtle cross the road?

### Word search answers:

1 eggs 2 basking 3 keel 4 carrion 5 reptile 6 shell 7 painted 8 pond 9 clutch

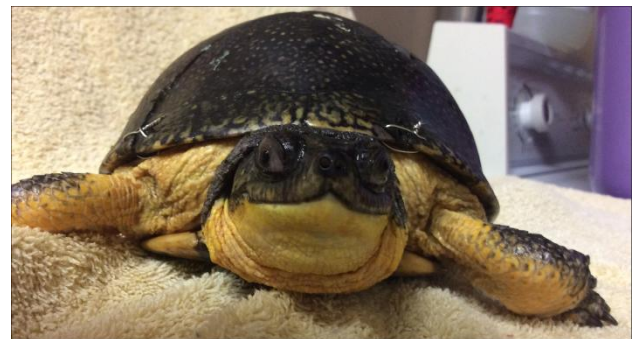
### Joke answers

1. Shellarious ones!
2. Get a mooove on!
3. To get to the shell station!

## Some of our Patients, Waiting For Spring Release!



Painted Turtle Physio: climbing the ramp



Blanding's Turtle with Shell Injury



Blanding's Hatchlings



Snapping Turtle Hatchling