

ONTARIO TURTLE

CONSERVATION CENTRE

Home of the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre



2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre's mission is to protect and conserve
Ontario's native turtles and their habitat

Our goals:

Turtle Conservation and Education Leadership

International Scientific Recognition

Organizational Excellence



Sue Carstairs

A Message from our Executive and Medical Director

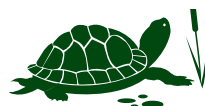
2018 saw an equally busy year to 2017, with admission levels higher than 2017, thanks to our extensive outreach and media presence. Our hatchling program also continued to grow. In total, we released 2,100 turtles in 2018, to help to augment populations across the province. Our multi-pronged approach to conservation continues to broaden our impact, and our collaborative work with both new and existing partners was vital to

expanding our reach. OTCC generates valuable data in a number of different areas, including road ecology, veterinary medicine, and conservation biology. In 2018 we really put our data to work, and made it available to the conservation world by publishing the results in a number of publications. A paper on wildlife rehabilitation and population viability has been started, in partnership with James Paterson and Christina Davy, as well as a second Ranavirus paper, in collaboration with Sibelle Torres Vilaca and Chris Kyle, of Trent University. The following articles were published last year:

- "Revisiting the hypothesis of sex-biased turtle road mortality." *Canadian Field Naturalist*. Carstairs, Dupuis-Desormeux, and Davy
- "Population reinforcement accelerates subadult recruitment rates in an endangered freshwater turtle." *Animal Conservation*. Carstairs, Paterson, Jager, Gasbarrini, and Davy
- "Evidence for low prevalence of ranaviruses in Ontario, Canada's freshwater turtle population." 2018. *PeerJ*. Carstairs
- "Male-bias in a population of Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) and female-bias in a population of Blanding's turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*) sharing the same habitat in Ontario, Canada." *In review*. Carstairs and Gasbarrini

2018 was also the final year of our three-year Capacity Building Initiative which enabled us to meet rapid growth in all program areas, put infrastructure in place, and cover higher operational expenses. Tremendous thanks go to the Alan and Patricia Koval Foundation, The Schad Foundation and The McLean Foundation, for supporting this initiative as "angel investors." While there are always challenges ahead, the capacity building project has placed us in an excellent position to maintain financial stability and sustainability. Thank you to all of our members and supporters for your support in 2018. You continue to make our vital conservation work throughout the province possible.

Dr. Sue Carstairs
Executive and Medical Director



ONTARIO TURTLE
CONSERVATION CENTRE



"Rusty" OTCC's Education Ambassador for
the Wood Turtle Species

The increased level of demand experienced at the Trauma Centre in 2017 continued into the 2018 season. 945 turtles were admitted from across Ontario, including 501 painted turtles, 314 snapping turtles, 81 Blanding's turtles, 20 wood turtles, 19 map turtles, 2 musk turtles and 1 spotted turtle, as well as 7 non-native species. 185 turtles of five different species overwintered at the Centre for further healing.

2018 saw the introduction of a new initiative to test our admissions for the presence of Ranavirus, since two positive cases had been found in Ontario. Given the many threats to declining turtle populations, discovering the prevalence of Ranavirus in a population, and learning more about its ecology, is critical. This was the first such survey to be carried out in Ontario. We have found a very low prevalence in Ontario's turtles so far, although it has



2100 Turtles Released Back to
Source Wetlands Across Ontario

945 Turtles Admitted to the
Trauma Centre

had devastating effects on amphibian populations, and is present in many of the waterways. OTCC will continue to screen populations for baseline health parameters on an on-going basis. OTCC also tests for Herpesvirus, a virus that shows similar signs to Ranavirus, as it has also

been found in Ontario turtles. Testing for Herpesvirus is also critical, since the virus has a carrier state, and turtles testing positive should not be released to the wild.

We also introduced an initiative in 2018 to microchip all turtles treated by OTCC prior to being released back into their source wetland. Microchipping will enable us to determine if a turtle has the misfortune to be injured twice, and returned to the hospital, thereby helping us to identify turtle crossing "hot spots" on our roads so that conservation action can be taken. Information acquired through microchipped turtles also helps to increase our knowledge on the movement of various species, and their habitat range and requirements.

HATCHLING AND HEAD-START PROGRAM

OTCC's Hatchling Program ensures that the eggs from injured female turtles admitted to the trauma centre are also saved, and the resultant hatchlings are returned to their mothers' source wetland ranges. The head-started juvenile turtles from the 2017 season were released back to their wetland homes throughout the spring and summer months of 2018.

This helps to mitigate the reproductive impact of injured females, while also replenishing declining populations. In the summer of 2018,

916 Hatchlings to Replenish
Declining Populations

557 Hatchlings Head-started for
Return to Wild in 2019

916 snapping turtle hatchlings were returned to the wild. A further 557 hatchlings, including 233 snapping turtles, 198 painted turtles, 103 Blanding's turtles, 20 map turtles, and 3 musk turtles overwintered at OTCC to give them a head-start when they are returned to the wild

the following spring and summer. Head-starting the hatchlings decreases their risk of predation, and significantly increases their chance of survival.



OTCC's Head-start Program is complemented by research in the field to evaluate the effectiveness of head-starting as a viable conservation strategy. This past season's research played an integral role in adding to the findings of this long-term research project. The project is designed to follow head-started juvenile Blanding's turtles to maturity in the field, and to track them using telemetry alongside their wild counterparts. In the process, we are establishing best practices not only for our own head-starting program, but also for those of other agencies and organizations around the world.



2018 Field Team at a portage pass

This past season saw 726 turtle locations recorded at our research site. Turtles identified included our head-started hatchlings, wild juvenile Blanding's, and other turtle species

encountered at the field site. We also released 6 head-starts. Three "new" wild juvenile Blanding's were found at

726 Turtle Locations Recorded at Field Site

the field site, and have been incorporated into the study to be tracked in future years. While we regularly weigh and measure each turtle, we do not often find them actually eating. In 2018, however, we tracked one of our study turtles (a head-start previously released in 2017) to find the turtle devouring a large tadpole!

In 2018, the results from the years 2012 to 2017 were detailed and compiled in a paper entitled "*Population reinforcement accelerates subadult recruitment rates in an endangered freshwater turtle.*" We are pleased to report that the paper has officially been accepted into the peer review journal *Animal Conservation*.



Photo Credit: Kelton Adderley-Heron

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

OTCC's Education and Outreach program had an action packed year, growing rapidly in numbers of participants, and inspiring direct conservation action among people of all ages and backgrounds. In 2018, 15,390 people participated in hands-on workshops and presentations. Over 100 schools were reached, involving 7808 students. Participants in our programs consistently indicate that they are inspired to take conservation action as a result of their involvement. In June, we involved youth groups in a special event to expand the pollinator garden in the Outdoor Centre. We were pleased to learn that this played a role in the City of Selwyn being designated as a Bee City by Bee Cities Canada. Other events included welcoming over 730 people to the centre for Sno-fest, workshops at forest and water festivals, sessions at summer camps and with youth groups, and our annual open house held in September. OTCC's partners with ten organizations on an on-going basis in order to maximize effectiveness and increase our outreach.



15,390 participants attended in-depth presentations on turtle conservation

7808 classroom students involved in hands-on sessions

100% of participants inspired to take action

SPECIAL EVENTS



First Responders Workshop

We continued to build on our work as a teaching and referral hospital in 2018. In March, OTCC held another special technical workshop to train and update first responders working at Wildlife Rehabilitation Centres and private veterinary clinics across the province.

A Turtle Trifecta!

In April, OTCC held a Turtle Trifecta event, in partnership with the Adopt-a-Pond Program of the Zoo and the Ontario Road Ecology Group. Guests enjoyed an evening at the zoo, met the teams from each of the three organizations, and discovered how we are working together to conserve turtles and wetlands.



Hatchling Release with KLT

In June of 2018, OTCC teamed up with Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) to release more than two dozen snapping turtle hatchlings back to the wild in the wetlands alongside the Stony Lake Trail network. Donors and volunteers of both the OTCC and KLT were present for this event. The turtles were hatched last fall from eggs recovered from a female snapping turtle that was injured near Stony Lake Trails, and brought to OTCC for treatment.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Year Ending December 31

Revenue

	2018	2017
Grants	560,072	445,000
Donations	282,031	421,104
Special Events and Fundraising	73,409	37,549
Investment Income	5,585	1,110
	921,097	904,763

Expenses

Wages and Benefits	242,606	189,252
Turtle veterinary care and supplies	220,364	197,038
Occupancy, Telephone and Utilities	103,984	95,991
Office, Professional fees, Bank charges	71,898	46,651
Special Events / Fundraising / Outreach	48,509	8,286
Amortization	9,273	7,712
	696,634	544,930

Excess of Revenue Over Expenses

	224,463	359,833
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Statement of Financial Position

As at Year Ending December 31

Assets

Current Assets

Cash	364,725	597,565
Accounts Receivable	59,507	25,530
Grants Receivable	53,734	94,699
Prepaid Expenses	5,097	5,097
Investments	405,585	
	888,648	722,891

Capital Assets

	26,655	24,620
Total Assets	915,303	747,511

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	23,676	23,934
Deferred Grant Revenue	67,668	124,081
	91,344	148,015

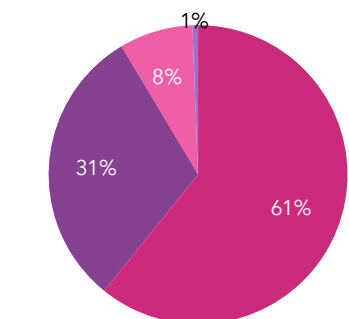
Fund Balances

Operating Fund	644,804	422,376
Capital Asset Fund	26,655	24,620
Internally Restricted Fund	152,500	152,500
Total Net Assets	823,959	599,496

Total Liabilities and Fund Balances

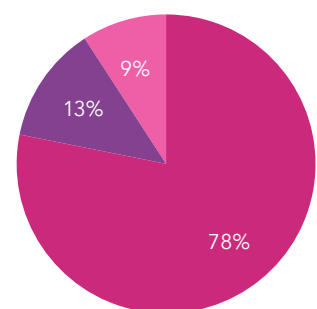
	915,303	747,511
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Source of Funds



- Grants
- Donations
- Special Events and Fundraising
- Investment Income

Use of Funds



- Turtle Conservation Programs
- Administration
- Fundraising

Note to Financial Statements

Our financial picture in 2017 shows a reserve of funds as a result of the success of our capacity building initiative generously funded by the Alan and Patricia Koval Foundation, The Schad Foundation, and The McLean Foundation. The surplus illustrated that we could maintain sustainability beyond Angel Investor Funding. Financials for 2018, the final year of the Angel Investor Initiative, illustrated that we could maintain this trend. Further, we have now established an 8 month operational reserve, put in place to protect against risk of decreased funding. By virtue of the nature of our funding, it is not entirely predictable; while approximately half is from smaller, private donations, the other half is the result of larger and more tenuous grants from private foundations. We were also fortunate to receive a large grant in 2016, 2017 and 2018, from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, which may not continue into 2019. The operational reserve will help ensure that we can weather unpredictable decreases, without affecting programming.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In Appreciation

A special thank you to our many volunteers who generously offered their time and expertise in 2018. Community and volunteer involvement has more than doubled in two just two years. In 2018, we involved 675 volunteers in the work of OTCC, who collectively donated over 8000 hours of time and mileage costs worth an estimated \$169,000. Without this incredible contribution from our dedicated volunteers, the accomplishments of the past year would not have been possible. We would also like to thank the many individuals, businesses and organizations that made generous donations of equipment and supplies, or held fundraising events on our behalf.



Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue



Balsam Lake Rangers weeding the Outdoor Education Centre



Chuck Potter and Kelly Wallace delivering donated supplies from Bancroft



A group of volunteers from BWXT donated a day to make repairs at OTCC's hospital and education centre

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Our Volunteers

Office and Administration

Sharon Beaucage-Johnson
Marilyn Hubley
Chris Jones
Melissa Jones
Isa Knor
Tim Morrison
Meri Saunders

Tank Cleaners

Kelton Adderley-Heron
Alena Alfred
Namrata Arif
Linn Aspelund
Holly Astrom
Leanne Bing
Cameron Boyd
Scotia Brailsford
Sarah Brown
Lisa Browning
Abbigail Buchan
Derek Buttineau
Adam Centurione
Justin Chan
Margaret Chan
Tash Chase
Michelle Cooke
Alexa Connors
Alina Cota-Merlo
Sophie Crowder
Aaron Dain
April DeJong
Scott Delyea
Eliana Evenaar
Keeva Fitzpatrick
Rachelle Fortier
Robert Gibson
Camilla Golec
Ann Gronow
Lily Hamlin
Nathaniel Hendry
Allie Hjort
Emily Hockey
Gabrielle Hoggarth
Sam Hoover
Bryan Hughes
Sarah Hunter
Sam Imamovic
Jesse Jarvis
Mark Jurgenson
Isa Knor
Anna Kramer

Brenna Kyle
Kaitlin Landry
Meg Langlois
Jennifer Larkin
Moragn L'Ecuyer
Courtney Leemakers
Jenna Mackenzie
Carli Mackisoc
Tiffany Martin
Narcisse Maurice
Drew Maxwell
Vivienne Maxwell
Justine McAndrews
Katie McPartlin
Michelle Miller
Samantha Morin
Siena Morris
Eric Mullen
Natasha Neville
Jodi Newman
Kelsey Numan
Grace Poff-Smith
Dylan Pond
Suzie Power
Matt Quinn
Victoria Reimer
John Robinson
Toby Rowland
Caitlin Sampson
Mandy Shepherd
Savanna Sloan
Dana Smith
Jonathan Stuchbery
Ariella Swartz
Jordan Taylor
Sadie Thomas
Sarah Thompson
Sarah Tomaszewski
Shannon VanDenbrock
Patrick White
Deb Whitmer
Nathaniel Wildsmith-Chappel
Emily Wright
Melissa Zubrickas

Feeders

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Margaret Chan
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Barb Evett
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Rachelle Fortier

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Robert Gibson
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Sue Hardill
Marilyn Hubley
Melissa Jones
Elizabeth Kitchen
Hannah Mackellar
Suzie Power
Meri Saunders
Cathy Sutherland
Sophia Tan
Sadie Thomas
Sibelle Torres Vilaca

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Bronwyn Fairchild
Rachel Fortier
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Pat Smith
Rob Steele
Karin Wasylkyk

Thank you to the additional 508 Turtle Taxi Drivers who drove injured turtles to the Trauma Centre from across the province.

In-Kind Donations

Thank you to the Riverview Park and Zoo for the donation of turtle supplies; Kelly Wallace and the town of Bancroft, for donation of wish list items, financial support, and raising awareness of turtle conservation; to Dr. Margo Tant, for the donation of her family canoe to the Field Research Project, and to David Beaucage-Johnson for the donation of original artwork for our limited edition t-shirt.

OUR SUPPORTERS

OTCC's work is made possible through the contributions of individual donors, foundations, corporate partners and organizations. We are deeply grateful for your generosity.

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Walter Yeung
Ondrej Zeman

We also thank the 830 donors who
gave less than \$150

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100,000+

Government of Ontario

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Bay of Quinte Vet Services
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Peterborough Handweavers' and Spinners
UK Online Giving Foundation
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York Simcoe Nature Club

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Colin Cassin

Director

Julia Phillips*

Director

* from November 2018



OTCC Board with Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Rod Phillips. Left to right, back row: Julia Phillips, Colin Cassin, Dwight Blythe, Rod Phillips, Mandy St. Germaine. Front row: Nicole Richards, Sue Carstairs, OTCC Executive and Medical Director.

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Dr. Sue Carstairs

Executive and Medical Director

Wendy Baggs

Education Coordinator

Donnell Gasbarrini

Turtle Programs Manager

Amanda Klack

Veterinary Technician

Diana Morrison

Office Administrator

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Office Administrator

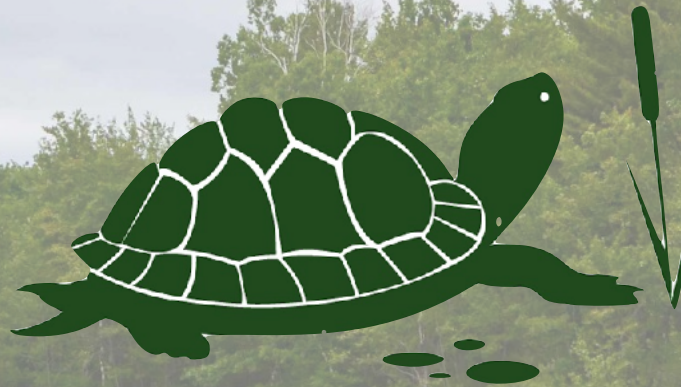


OTCC Staff: Left to right: Amanda Klack, Wendy Baggs, Sue Carstairs, Donnell Gasbarrini, Diana Morrison, Joanne O'Heron

Contract and Short-term Staff

Kelton Adderley-Heron, Cagangul Balakbabalar, Lisa Black, Margaret Chan, Nancy Croome, Benjamin Dixon, Lindsay Enslow, Emmalene Findlay, Rachel Fortier, Robert Gibson, Krista Jager, Mackenzie Jones, Melissa Larson, Eva Lehvonen, Maureen Lilley, Britney Lobb, Drew Maxwell, Kirsten Pellerin, Melanie Prentice, Toby Rowland, Nicole Teboekhorst, Gracyn E. VanHalteren, Shanel Viau, Julia Wallace, Anam Zahid.

The Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre is Canada's leading turtle rehabilitation and conservation centre. The mandate of the OTCC is to protect and conserve Ontario's at-risk freshwater turtles and their wetland habitats.



ONTARIO TURTLE CONSERVATION CENTRE

Home of the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre

Charitable Registration # 85752 4409 RR0001

4-1434 Chemong Road, Selwyn, Ontario, K9J 6X2, 705-741-5000

www.ontarioturtle.ca info@ontarioturtle.ca



Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre



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