

TURTLE TIMES



Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre*



Spring, 2020

Message from the Executive and Medical Director

By Dr. Sue Carstairs

What a year!

Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre experienced another year of growth in 2019. While we didn't expect admissions to increase by another 50% over 2018, we somehow managed to squeeze them all in! With our new buildings being renovated off-site, we will be ready for another busy season!

Our work has gained attention globally, and I presented an overview of the programs at the Turtle Survival Conference in Tucson in August, and recently also at the Desert Tortoise Council Symposium in Vegas.

Our multi-pronged approach to conservation, and our keenness to collaborate and partner with multiple other organizations and individuals, enables us to strengthen and broaden our conservation impact. Not only does this increase our scope, but it just feels good to bring other specialists and professionals on board- everyone brings so much to the 'table'!

Our field work plans are underway, continuing our long-term study to evaluate 'headstarting' as a conservation tool for freshwater turtles. Results are very encouraging, and we feel that our hatchling program adds a valuable prong to our conservation programming.

At the heart of everything is education – we feel that education is key to conservation, and we are always striving to increase our scope in this area; to the public of all ages, and also to veterinary professionals and to those running wildlife rehabilitation centres.

Thank you to every one of our supporters – without you none of this would be possible!



The Order of Ontario Awarded to Dr. Sue Carstairs



We were delighted to hear that Dr. Sue Carstairs is to receive the Order Of Ontario, the province's highest honour. The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and Chancellor of the Order of Ontario made the announcement on February 27.

"On behalf of all Ontarians, I congratulate the 2018 Order of Ontario appointees. Members of the Order of Ontario exemplify, individually and collectively, the best qualities of good citizenship," said Her Honour Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. "Through their voluntary service, creativity, and the relentless pursuit of excellence, they demonstrate how we in Ontario are working to build a more just and sustainable future. The work and contributions of each appointee challenge us to take an active interest in where we live and how we care for the environment and one another."

The Order of Ontario is awarded to people who leave a lasting legacy in the province, in Canada, and beyond.

The Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and supporters congratulate Sue on this well-deserved award.



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

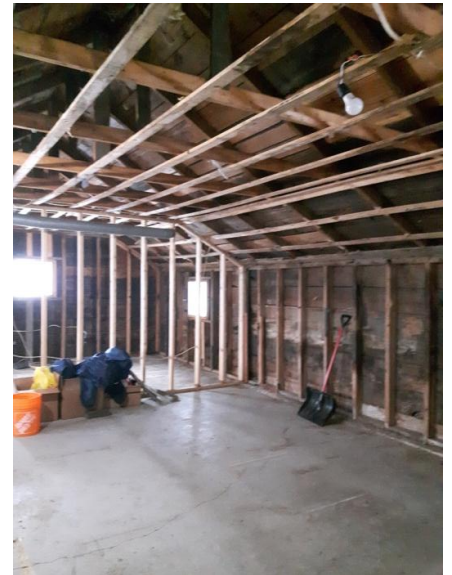
New Building Update

As you know, Mary and Gerry Young are generously allowing us to use the buildings on their land, to cater to our growing number of admissions. This will allow us to continue to accept an ever increasing number of turtle cases from across the province.

So much work has been done on the interior of one of the buildings that it is hardly recognizable and going full steam ahead!



Demolition: In January Rob Steele and Tracy McNaught worked tirelessly to remove old paneling, insulation, plumbing fixtures, etc. and had the building almost stripped down to the studs. Wendy Baggs, also involved in this endeavor, switched hats from Education Coordinator to Demolition Crew/Forewoman. Harry & Bev McKenna, along with Steve Paul have also been wonderful with donating their time and talents. Gerry Young dug a trench from the well to the building, for our water supply- no small feat in the winter cold!



Herb Lang Well Drilling Ltd. offered to put a well in at no cost to us and completed the installation, mid-February. Adam Chapman, Architect, has done a wonderful set of drawings for us that make us excited for the future of the OTCC. Mike Scriver, Electrician, has rewired the entire building to ensure it is updated and safe. The floor has been painted by Carol Small and Steve Paul, and the insulation is now being completed and next the tanks will be plumbed in.

Thank you to these wonderful, hard-working volunteers and trades people who are moving this project along so efficiently. We're excited for the future!



Volunteer Spotlight!

Marilyn Hubley

By Joanne O'Heron, Administrator

Marilyn has been a volunteer with the OTCC for approximately 5 years. She saw an advertisement for volunteer recruitment and the rest is history! When she first started, she was cleaning hatchling tanks and then switched over to feeding the adults. She has also been featured in a couple of OTCC release videos that were filmed by Gervais Vignola of Rescue Diaries. Before she started volunteering at the OTCC, Marilyn was not a morning person. Now she enjoys getting up early Monday mornings to come to the centre and care for the turtles.

Marilyn used to own and rescue a large number of Siberian Huskies but now volunteers with a Husky Rescue. And volunteering seems to be her passion – she is also a board member with the Peterborough Field Naturalists and is their media contact person. She also volunteers at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre in the ER.

It is always a pleasure to see Marilyn's face Monday mornings. We know we can count on you for anything we ask!



Thank you Marilyn!

News from our Volunteer Coordinator

By Isa Knor, Volunteer Coordinator



We're excited to introduce a new collaborator organization that will help us achieve our conservation goals in 2020! Katimavik, which means "gathering together" or "meeting place" in the Inuktitut language. They are a group of "diverse, engaged, and empowered youth working together to create just relationships, transform communities, the environment, and themselves for a better Canada." They achieve this through various aspects of the program which are; volunteering 30 hrs weekly, learning about Canada's indigenous peoples and working towards truth and reconciliation, team building/collaboration, designing/implementing community projects, managing the Katimavik house and planning cultural discovery through outings and activities. Volunteers from across Canada spend 3 months in Peterborough before heading to a new location. This means that for 2020 we will have 4 different volunteers assisting us!

As part of the local Katimavik Committee, the OTCC contributes to the growth of these volunteers through the volunteer roles that we offer. They will be assisting us with cleaning and feeding the adults and hatchlings, helping with general maintenance, cleaning, data entry, and education! With over 7000 volunteer hours spent last year at the OTCC we're happy to have our first volunteer, Maude, be with us for 30 hours each week! Maude is from Quebec City and has a passion for animals. She hopes to gain valuable life skills and learn more about herself on this journey!

News from our Education Coordinator

By Wendy Baggs, Education Coordinator

The Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre's educational program enjoyed another busy, productive year! In 2019 we visited 31 cities, engaged and interacted with students from 165 schools (public, secondary, college and university). We engaged with almost 9500 individuals, 3500 of those were students!



Hundreds of families camping at Provincial and National Parks attended our events and displays, all eager to learn about Ontario's turtles, the struggles they encounter to survive and what we can do as individuals to help with their survival.

Community groups such as Brownies, Guides, Sparks, Scouts etc. took in our field trip experience in order to learn the importance of biodiversity, wetlands and the vital role that turtle plays in the balance of these ecosystems and food chains. We also experienced a higher volume of interest with the senior population.

People of all ages can enjoy the comfortable relaxed atmosphere that the OTCC has to offer. There are so many options and opportunities to learn turtles through Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre.



Contact Wendy at education@ontarioturtle.ca or 705-741-5000, today and book your event for school, retirement centre, birthday party, private tour, summer camp etc. We have something for everyone!

We also offer a **Wedding Venue** for couples looking for a very special place for their wedding ceremony. Our acre of outdoor education space is a great place to share your vows, and support turtle conservation, meanwhile!

Turtle Taxi – How it Works

By Diana Morrison, Administrator

Turtle Taxi drivers often play vital roles in the lives of Ontario's turtles. Without the help of more than 650 drivers across the province, we would not have a way of getting them here for what can often only be described as life-saving, emergency medical care. Let's use Windsor as a great location example – it is nearly 5 hours away from Peterborough. Here's what happens when we get a call from someone who lives in that area and has found an injured turtle.

The first thing our hotline staff do is to look at our map and determine who is the nearest "first responder", in the turtle's location. First responders are veterinarians and veterinary technicians who have been trained by Dr. Sue Carstairs on emergency medical treatment for turtles. They give fluids and pain medication and stabilize fractures. We must first ask them if they can take in the turtle and if they can, we call the person back and they take the turtle to the first responder's location.

Next, we send out an email, asking our taxi drivers if they can help get the turtle from the first responder's location to Peterborough. For a turtle as far away as Windsor, this can often mean working with 3 or 4 drivers who are willing to take the turtle on part of the journey. It involves organizing connections between each person, passing along phone numbers and sometimes meeting locations, and keeping track of everything. So we're talking about emails or phone calls back and forth a number of times, to each of these drivers.


We then call the first responder to let them know that someone will be coming to pick up the turtle, and when. Then we write the expected date of arrival on our intake board in the hospital area, so that the veterinary staff know what to expect each day. All that for one turtle – and imagine doing that for up to 30 turtles per day! Plus, in addition to arranging admissions, the hotline also arranges the releases of rehabilitated turtles and hatchlings, throughout the season.



Without our amazing hotline staff, our dedicated First Responders, and our tireless Taxi Drivers, we wouldn't be able to admit turtles from across the province and get them timely medical care. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated people in the province help with this crucial work, to save Ontario's turtles.

If you are interested in becoming a turtle taxi driver, email us at volunteer@ontarioturtle.ca!

Ways to Donate

The Donation Page on our website has been updated to more clearly define different ways that you can donate to the OTCC. Click on the  button at the top of the home page to see what your options are.

Donation Options

Ontario's turtles are counting on you – you can help!



[One-time Gift](#)



[Donate Monthly](#)

(use PayPal)



[Legacy Gifts and Gifts
of Publicly Traded
Securities](#)



[Corporate Matching
Gifts Program](#)



[Donating Equipment,
Supplies, or Skills](#)

Think Spring!

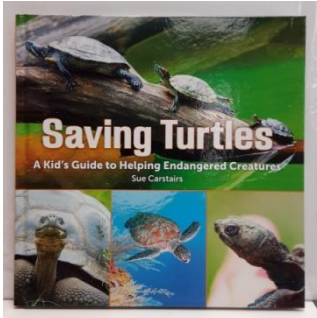


"I Brake for Turtles" and "Saving the World" t-shirts in youth sizes, now available in four colours (purple, dark green, navy, and Sapphire), size XS – L. Youth sizes priced at only \$15 – show your support for Ontario's turtles!

I Brake for Turtles and Saving The World T-shirts are available in adult sizes, in black, navy, dark green, and burgundy, for \$20.



For those cooler spring days or summer evenings, we have hoodies! Youth sizes XS -L (burgundy and navy) in our "Saving the World" pattern with website on the back-\$43, and adult sizes S-XL in both "I Brake for Turtles" (back of shirt, logo front) and "Saving the World" (logo on front of shirt, website on back)- \$49. Saving the World hoodies come in burgundy, navy, dark green, and gray. We also carry zippered hoodies in dark gray and navy. Shop on our website for details!



Always a popular gift at only \$20, this hard-cover book, written by Dr. Sue Carstairs, tells you what steps may be taken to help turtles that are found injured. It covers many other topics such as raising and releasing baby turtles, tagging and tracking turtles in the wild, and more!



Still one of our most popular gifts at \$40, the adopt-a-turtle kits come with a painted or spotted turtle and information about each species, a photo of a turtle in our hospital, a bumper sticker, a certificate of symbolic adoption, and a tax receipt for \$25!



Bumper sticker, window cling or magnet - \$5



Kids' bucket hats-\$30, 100% cotton, washable



Adult ball caps-\$20, 100% cotton, adjustable



Stainless steel water bottle \$20 (Paddy not included)



Our jewellery line is constantly changing

Shop online at www.ontarioturtle.ca/shop

The Hatchling Hub



The Wood Turtle is one of the most endangered turtles found in Ontario – in fact, if you saw one living in its natural environment, you would count yourself as very lucky to have seen one. They are listed Provincially as endangered, because of habitat loss, road mortality, and illegal poaching for the pet trade. Can you guess why he is called a Wood turtle? (hint: look at his beautiful shell) Wood turtles do not shed their shell sections or "scutes" (made of the same stuff as your fingernails). Instead, their shells develop into gnarled appearance, as they get older...sort of like wood...hehe..get it?

Rusty, pictured here, now lives at the centre. You can see in the photos that he doesn't have front legs. He was part of a study group in a

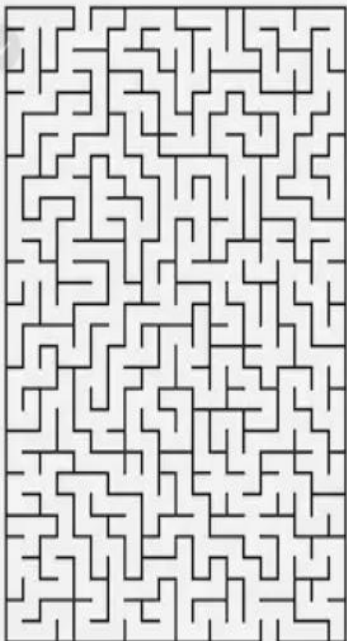
secret location (because they're so endangered we can't tell you where he's from) and he stopped moving. The people doing the study knew this because he had a tracking device on his back for 23 years, so that they could find him with special equipment. So, they went looking for him and when they found him, they saw that he had been attacked by an animal.

Rusty was brought here to our turtle hospital, to heal from his wounds. Because he lost his front legs, he can no longer swim or hunt for food. In his natural world, he would spend more time on land than other turtles (semi-aquatic). He would find a damp bit of soil and tap his front legs on the ground to make the sound and feel of rain. This would bring worms and bugs up to the surface, and he would eat them! He also likes fruit.

While we're sad that he can no longer go back to his home wetland, we're happy to have him live here. We know he will be safe, get all the right food, and live in a special habitat built just for him – he has a ramp up to his lighted area! It also means that if you come to visit us, you will get to see a very rare turtle that most people have never otherwise seen.



Help me get to my friend!



Colour me!

