

The Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre works to protect and conserve Ontario's native turtles and the habitat in which they live

Turtle Handling 101

Do:

For turtles other than snapping turtles:

- Use both hands, positioned firmly at the sides 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
- Snapping turtles have very long necks that they can extend very quickly. They will bite if they feel threatened (it's their only defence as they can't fit in their shell!)
- Always keep your hands and body away from the front half of the turtle and never handle a turtle if you don't feel comfortable doing so.

Do not:

- Tap on the shell, or knock it
- Pick up a turtle that you are not comfortable holding
- **Never** pick a turtle up by its tail

Examples:

Most Ontario Turtles:



Snapping Turtles:



Grip edge of shell at hind leg and raise back end, quickly slide other hand between back legs to support turtle from lower shell, and lift

How to help a turtle cross the road:

- Be aware of cars, do not attempt to help a turtle if it is not safe to do so
- Always move the turtle in the direction it was going/is facing
- Use a floor mat or shovel if you are uncomfortable or unable to lift the turtle
- Demonstration: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lgd_B6iKPxU
- Turtles carry many types of bacteria including salmonella – be sure to wash your hands after handling a turtle!

Tel: (705)741-5000
4-1434 Chemong Rd., Selwyn, ON K9J 6X2
www.ontarioturtle.ca

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Turtle Releases

- The location of release of turtles is critical to their survival. We try and release them as close as possible to where they were found (ideally within a km or so), in an appropriate body of water. All ages and species prefer different habitats, though, and also need specific habitats for survival.
- When releasing any turtle, make sure they are placed **IN** the water, or make sure you see them going in the water – **do not leave them on dry land.**
- **Hatchlings** need shallower, swampy or marshy, boggy areas. They need lots of vegetation, so they can hide from predators. Do not put them in open water – they will become prey for other species very quickly. Releasing hatchlings often requires going into the water yourself, either with chest/hip waders or a boat!
- **Adult snapping turtles** can be released in more open, and larger bodies of water. They aren't worried about predators!
- **Adult Blanding's turtles** prefer different habitats at different times of the year. Generally, they prefer the more marshy and boggy areas, rather than open water, however.
- **Adult Painted turtles** do best in areas with plenty of basking logs, and smaller bodies of water eg the tributaries off a lake.
- These marshy or boggy or swampy areas, are ideal for hatchlings and provide lots of hiding places. They are best placed away from the dry land, however – this may need waders or a kayak or canoe!



Thank you for taking our turtles back to their home!!

PLEASE CALL US AT 1-705-741-5000 IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR ISSUES DURING A RELEASE!

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