

## Threats to turtles in Ontario

Turtles face many threats both globally and locally. In fact, turtles are among the most endangered vertebrates on the planet; with half of the 300 species now threatened with extinction. In Ontario, our eight species of turtles are all considered at-risk federally.

The biggest threats to turtle populations are habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, road and boating mortality, fishing bycatch, and illegal collection and trade.

Those living in Ontario may be surprised by the last threat... poaching? In Ontario? It can't be! Unfortunately, illegal collection of turtles is a global issue and Ontario is not immune.

In Ontario, it is not legal to keep any native wildlife in captivity without the appropriate permits. Some people may unknowingly take turtles from the wild without realizing they are doing harm to turtle populations. However, turtle populations can only remain healthy when they have a very low adult mortality, since so few make it to adulthood. They are also very slow to mature, and don't start reproducing until they are eight to 20 years of age. As a result, the loss of even a few turtles causes great harm to overall populations.

*Photo: Joe Crowley*



*It is thought that spotted turtle populations in Ontario have suffered greatly due to poaching. This species is now considered endangered in Ontario. Their gentle nature and small size unfortunately make them very attractive as pets.*



If you find an injured turtle,  
call us immediately!

**705-741-5000**

To report a poaching concern, contact:

**Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)**

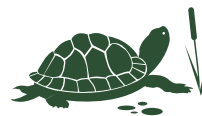
Conservation Officer Tips Line

1-877-TIPS-MNR (1-877-847-7667)

### *We need your help*

Donations are critical to our ability to continue helping Ontario's turtles. OTCC is a registered charity, and relies on donations for our essential conservation work. Donations to the OTCC are always welcome and all go towards turtle conservation.

Visit [ontarioturtle.ca/donation-options](http://ontarioturtle.ca/donation-options) to find out how to support us financially.



**ONTARIO TURTLE**  
CONSERVATION CENTRE

4-1434 Chemong Rd.,  
Selwyn, ON K9J 6X2

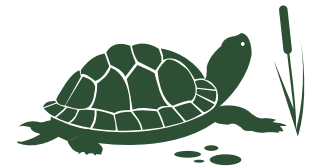
**[www.ontarioturtle.ca](http://www.ontarioturtle.ca)**

[info@ontarioturtle.ca](mailto:info@ontarioturtle.ca)

705-741-5000



*The legal name of OTCC is the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre.  
Charitable Registration # 85752 4409 RR0001*



**ONTARIO TURTLE**  
CONSERVATION CENTRE



## Poaching

**Illegal collection and trade  
of Ontario's turtles**



## Poaching is the illegal capture of a wild animal for any reason

There are some people who unfortunately remove turtles from the wild on a large scale, for profit. These are often then illegally exported to other countries for sale; usually for the pet trade. It is thought that this has caused severe population declines for some of Ontario's turtle species such as the spotted turtle, wood turtle, and Blanding's turtle, leading to them becoming endangered or threatened.

This is the reason we always keep the location of our field work confidential, as we do not want this information getting into the wrong hands, since we carry out extensive work with Blanding's turtles.

***It is not legal to fish  
for turtles in Ontario***

*The wood turtle (below) is Ontario's most terrestrial freshwater turtle, and has been poached extensively throughout its range. As a result, only small population pockets remain and they are now considered endangered in Ontario.*

*Photo: Joe Crowley*



## How You Can Help

Call the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Conservation Officer Tips Line at 1-877-TIPS-MNR (1-877-847-7667) if you suspect any of the following:

- someone illegally taking turtles from the wild
- someone fishing for turtles
- the illegal sale of turtles or turtle parts

If you'd like to adopt a turtle as a pet, you can rehome one of the many unwanted pets through your local animal shelter. Little RES-Q ([www.littleresq.net](http://www.littleresq.net)) is located in Central Ontario, and rehomes unwanted pet turtles. Never take a turtle from the wild.



*Photo: Scott Gillingwater*

*The Blanding's turtle (above) faces many threats, including poaching for the pet trade. Their permanent 'smile' and calm demeanor are their downfall in this case. They are now considered threatened in Ontario.*