

Did You Know?

- Turtles have no parental care so, once the female has finished laying her eggs, she does not return to the nest. Luckily, the hatchlings know instinctively what to do and how to take care of themselves.
- Raccoons are one of the biggest predators of nests. While this is a normal occurrence, humans often inadvertently attract raccoons by leaving out food sources such as garbage.
- In most Ontario species, whether the hatchlings are male or female depends on the temperature they are incubated at. This is another reason why it is so important to not disturb the nest.
- Some hatchlings will overwinter in the nest, so do not be alarmed if you don't see hatchlings emerge in the fall. Do not dig up the nest to see what's going on! Hopefully, the hatchlings will emerge in the spring.
- Digging up a nest is illegal, and so is taking hatchlings from the wild. Let's leave them wild!

Photo: James Ostler



If you find an injured turtle,
call us immediately!

705-741-5000

We need your help

Nest protectors can be purchased at OTCC with all proceeds going towards the care of our turtles.

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 to find out how to support us financially.

Cover photo: Sue Carstairs, hatchling emerging after artificial incubation at OTCC.



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CONSERVATION CENTRE

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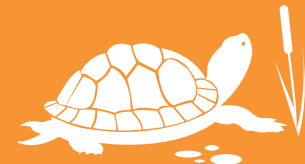


The Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre respectfully acknowledges that it is situated on the treaty and traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishnaabeg. We offer our gratitude to the First Peoples for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations.

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

Nest Protection

Improving the odds
for eggs and hatchlings



ONTARIO TURTLE
CONSERVATION CENTRE

Protecting nests and eggs gives turtle populations a much-needed boost



Turtle eggs are very prone to being dug up and eaten by animals such as raccoons. As a result, very few eggs survive long enough to hatch, unfortunately. While the eggs are a normal food source for many different animals, turtle populations need all the help they can get right now, with all eight of Ontario's native species

considered at-risk federally. Protecting the nest gives the eggs a better chance of hatching.

Nests are very sensitive to disturbance

It is legal to protect a turtle nest on your own property, but the nest itself must not be disturbed in any way. Interfering with the nests, even slightly, can kill the eggs or hatchlings. Don't give in to the temptation to "take a peek." Some hatchlings will overwinter in the nest, so leave nests alone even if the hatchlings have not yet emerged when you expected them to.

Turtles choose their nest sites carefully

Turtles are very picky as to where they lay their eggs, and so will take a long time to decide on the location of the nest. As a result, property owners often will see the female 'hanging out' for some time, even before digging the nest.

Actual digging and laying of the eggs also is a time-consuming activity. Turtles, after all, do everything slowly! June is the most common month to see turtles laying eggs in Ontario. Please do not to disturb them during this time.



Photo above: Scott Gillingwater

Photo below: Eric Woodley

Nest protectors

Nest protectors can be purchased at OTCC or plans are available online to build your own.

It is very important that a nest protector be made of the correct materials and be installed correctly. It is also vital that it allows for natural elements such as rain and sun to pass through and that the temperature of the nest is not affected in any way.

The nest protector shown below is a very easy one to install and will allow for safe nest protection.

Place the nest protector over the top of the nest with the nest centered in the middle. Be sure not to disturb the nest itself. Stake the four corners of the wooden frame. Hammer them all the way down into the dirt to prevent movement or disturbance.

The notches in the sides of the nest protector are critical, as they allow the hatchlings to leave the nest when they emerge.

Make sure that the notches are free from vegetation.



**Never dig up or disturb
a turtle nest**



Visit our website or call us at 705-741-5000 to order your nest protector.