

Take a Sneak Peek at Our New Home!



Scan the code to learn more and to donate now. Or, go to: ontarioturtle.ca

2,300 Admissions

to our hospital so far this year! ... Not including the THOUSANDS of hatchlings still hatching!



The Long Road to OTCC's New Home!

With the kindness of Mary Young and Gerry Young, who gifted the land to build on, and with the help of so many generous people such as yourself, we have met our goal. Construction of our purpose-built facility is now complete! We will now be able to expand the important conservation programs we carry out, and ensure that we will become a destination *'Where Community and Conservation Connect'*.

We could not have accomplished this without a LOT of support; thank you to those who donated, whether in the form of funds, services, materials, equipment, or time. Without this overwhelming support, the budget no doubt would have put this out of reach for us, and for the turtles. We are so excited to be expanding programs that will enable us to help turtle conservation even more.

We will let everyone know when we will be open to the public, but meanwhile, we can't wait to give you a sneak peek!

Back Home!

In 2024, OTCC released **5,011** turtles back to their home wetlands. That's over 5,000 turtles that would have been lost if not for YOUR help!!



Left: Our new surgery has much more space, so we can expand as a teaching hospital. It has TWO surgery tables now! (Thank you Kathleen for the donation of our second one!).

Right: This is one of thousands of babies we hatched from eggs retrieved from hospital admissions. All will be released back to their mother's wetland homes.



We incubated almost **9,000** eggs this season - these were retrieved from turtles admitted to the hospital.



Above: this adult Blanding's turtle was admitted with a severe fracture of the upper shell, or carapace. **On the left** you can still see the orthopedic wires that were placed surgically, as well as the initial tape that is used to secure the pieces until surgery is carried out. **On the right**, you can see the wires have been removed and you can barely see the fracture! He will be released in the spring - he can't wait!

Our hotline staff fielded over **10,000** calls this season, helping turtles get help and answering the public's questions.



Left: these are Paddy's new digs! Paddy is a snapping turtle who lives with us since he is unfortunately not releasable. He helps us spread the word about conservation. We still have some work to make it even more interesting for him, but we know he will love it! Thank you to George who donated his time and energy to this! - it is a work of art!

12,000 people took part in our education events; no small feat considering we were also moving!

Below right: more of the thousands of hatchlings that we have overwintering with us, because we can't get enough of them!



photo: Sue Carstairs

Below left: the new surgery as well as the ICU and hatchling rooms have viewing windows, so you will be able to see the turtles getting their treatments and surgery! You can also see part of the naming plaques that feature throughout - we still have a few naming opportunities available!



photo: Sue Carstairs

What does it take to care for the 2,000 turtles overwintering with us?

\$17,000 worth of UVB lights per year

\$115 worth of worms per week

\$1,000 worth of commercial turtle food per month

\$3,000 worth of electricity per month!

\$15,000 worth of medical supplies per season

\$25,000 worth of microchips per year

PLUS! 6,640 volunteer hours from 116 volunteers!!

...To see them released back into the wild? PRICELESS!



photo: Sue Carstairs

The adult **snapping turtle** shown at left is one of our 2,300 admissions in 2024. As you can see, he had a fractured jaw. This is common in snapping turtles, from injuries due to cars. They cannot tuck their heads into their shells and so they often get head injuries. This fracture was repaired by anesthetizing the turtle and using orthopedic wire to secure the pieces back into shape. The wire will be removed before release (this one is overwintering with us, as he came in later in the season). We have about 2,000 turtles overwintering with us this year.

Right: a **painted turtle** patient hangs out on her basking rock. OTCC spends approximately \$17,000 a year on UVB light bulbs, to keep the turtles healthy! These bulbs emit the equivalent of sunlight, which allows absorption of calcium - essential for hatchlings to grow solid healthy shells, and for the healing adults to repair their shells (which are made of bone!).

Each light has to be replaced about every 6 months, as the emissions wane over time. These are among the many essential supplies needed to ensure the turtles heal properly before being released. Each tank also has a heat light, necessary since turtles are ectotherms - cold blooded animals that need the environmental heat to control their body temperature. Providing this temperature range is essential to everything they do!



photo: Sue Carstairs



photo: Sue Carstairs

Left: this adult **map turtle** is also spending the winter with us, recovering from a fractured carapace - the orthopedic wire can still be seen. The impact left her with a fractured left front leg, but she is regaining use of it really well. She also suffered damage to her left eye, leaving it only partially visual. Luckily, she has full sight in her right eye. She is having no trouble eating, and has a healthy appetite! We microchip each turtle that is large enough before release. We have been doing this since 2018 and we see quite a few turtles annually that have been admitted before! This allows us to see how our hospital cases are doing over time. Because we always release them close to where they were found, it also allows us to see how far they have traveled.

Ecopassages for turtles allow them safe passage UNDER roads, therefore preventing road mortality.

OTCC is teaming up with Animex International and Eco-Kare International to help stop road mortality.



Road mortality is obviously a huge problem for Ontario's turtles. Southern Ontario has an extremely high density of roads, and they overlay exactly with our 8 native turtle species' home ranges. Our work in the hospital as well as our headstarting program helps to mitigate these losses, and can actually have a population effect, slowing population decline. We also want to PREVENT the losses however! Many projects are underway throughout the province to construct ecopassages, allowing safe passage under the road. Often, OTCC's data will inform where these should be placed.

We are excited to partner with **Animex International** and **Eco-Kare International**. Animex manufactures fencing that is used alongside ecopassages, to guide turtles into the culvert under the road, and Eco-Kare are experts in implementing the passages and other mitigation projects. Together, we will spearhead more road mortality mitigation in Ontario. OTCC data will help to inform locations, and we also will help with implementation and monitoring of these projects.

A large part of our new facility will focus on conservation education that will also show people how they can help. Many ecopassages have been implemented due to the public's work towards them. We would love to inspire more of this amazing work!

Parks Canada has partnered with OTCC to help to spread awareness about turtle conservation. With their help, we formed the **Ontario Turtle Conservation Network**, to connect those carrying out conservation initiatives in Ontario. Parks Canada has also constructed a wonderful ecopassage educational display that is going to be a prominent feature in our new education centre. The photo above shows this display, which will hopefully inspire more ecopassages!

How Your Donation Helps

Rescue and Rehabilitation: Your support allows us to provide life-saving care to injured turtles, giving them the best chance for recovery and release back into their natural habitat. This can have a population impact!

Hatchling Program: Contributions help to fund our 'headstarting' program, collecting eggs that would have been lost from turtles admitted to our hospital. They are then incubated, hatched and finally released back to their mothers' home wetlands.

Field Work: Donations help us to monitor our headstarted turtles and ensure they are thriving and surviving; they also help with our on-the-ground mitigation projects to help prevent mortality.

Education: With your help, we can continue to educate the public about the importance of turtles in our ecosystem and how we can all help protect them. We can also continue to provide training to other professionals and facilities.

Research: OTCC is at the forefront of turtle conservation science, collecting valuable data to better understand turtle populations and improve conservation strategies.



Our **1,500** Turtle Taxi volunteers drove a total of **271,542 km** in 2024 to ensure that turtles received immediate care. That's equivalent to almost **seven times around the world!**

(Note that people combine turtle trips with their planned personal trips whenever possible.)



As a charitable organization, we rely on the support of people like you to continue our mission. Your contribution, no matter the size, makes a real difference.

Donate today and be a part of something meaningful. Together, we can give Ontario's turtles the chance they deserve.

With thanks for all your support; past, present and future!

Sincerely,

Executive and Medical Director

Registered Charity #85752 4409 RR0001

Left: This is what it's all about - releasing turtles back home - absolutely the best part of our job! They are released to their home wetlands all over the province! ***5,011 turtles were released back home in 2024 - with thanks to YOU!***

How You Can Help

Donate Online:

ontarioturtle.ca/donate

Shop Online:

ontarioturtle.ca/shop

Local pickup available, or ship to anywhere in Canada!

Your Name In Stone:

Be part of OTCC history

ontarioturtle.ca/brick



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for links to all of the above. Or, go to:

ontarioturtle.ca

Yes, I want to support OTCC's turtle conservation programs!

\$1000* \$500 \$250 \$100 Surprise us _____

**donations of \$1000 or more will be thanked with a personalized plaque in our new facility*

Please find enclosed my **cheque**, or Please charge my **credit card**:

Card # _____ Expiry: ____/____ CVV: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Complete if your contact information has changed:

Name: _____ Street: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

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Prefer to donate another way?

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Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre

2785 Television Rd
Peterborough ON
K9L 1E9

E-TRANSFER:

info@ontarioturtle.ca

PHONE:

705-741-5000