ONTARIO TURTLE
CONSERVATION CENTRE

Our role in conservation

Turtles are a vital part of our healthy wetlands, and our wetlands are vital to our health too, as a source of our drinking water. Seven of the eight native species of turtles are considered “Species At Risk” in Ontario.

The Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre is a registered charity, with the goal of assisting with the conservation of Ontario’s turtles, and the habitat in which they live. We accomplish this by:

- Operating a hospital for Ontario’s native turtles,
- Running a hatchling program from eggs collected from females admitted to the hospital,
- Carrying out field studies to learn more about what happens to these turtles when they are released, and to learn about Ontario’s turtles in general, and
- Running an extensive education program.

If you find an injured turtle, call us immediately!

705-741-5000

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** to find out how to support us financially.

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info@ontarioturtle.ca

705-741-5000

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

Ecopassages

aka Turtle Tunnels!

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Ecopassages provide a safe way for animals to cross the road

Ecopassages are structures designed to create safe passage for wildlife to cross roads. Road mortality is second only to habitat loss as a reason for turtle population declines in Ontario, since turtles must travel long distances on land, to look for appropriate habitat, mates, feeding grounds, and to lay eggs.

The type of ecopassage will depend on the wildlife species; for turtles a means to cross under the road works the best. This is combined with low fencing that guides the turtle to the entrance of the culvert.

Sometimes, an existing culvert can be utilized, and other times one has to be constructed. This can be costly, and is best carried out when roads are due to be serviced.

Many types of culverts can be utilized and often are constructed specifically as ecopassages.

Over 90% of turtles admitted to our hospital were injured on roads.

Please slow down and watch for turtles, especially while driving through wetland areas. If it is safe for you to do so, an uninjured turtle may be moved across the road in the direction they were heading.

Are you up for the challenge?

Getting an ecopassage built can be a very difficult, long-term and expensive challenge. If you think there is a problem "hotspot" for road mortality in your area, here are some things you can do:

- Bring it to the attention of your local municipal councillor.
- Visit the OTCC and learn more about ecopassages.
- Talk to OTCC's education department about hosting an ecopassage educational event for your area.
- Raise funds to support a project.
- Ask OTCC about volunteer opportunities to help build these structures.
- Educate friends and neighbours and ask for their support.

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP

If ecopassage implementation isn't an option in your community, there are plenty of other ways that you can get involved to help Ontario's turtles.

Volunteer with OTCC

- Turtle Taxi – volunteers help bring us injured turtles from across the province.
- Turtle Care – volunteers help us feed and clean the 1,000 turtles in our care.
- Fundraising
- Outreach and Education

Be a Turtle Steward

You can also help with turtle conservation by:

- Driving carefully. Always watch for turtles on the road, especially during summer.
- Bringing injured turtles to our hospital for rehabilitation. Even turtles that may appear to have not survived can be brought to our hospital. Many will be females carrying eggs and we can collect these and hatch them; returning the babies to the mother's home wetland. Visit our website for tips and information about handling an injured turtle.
- Reporting your sightings to Turtle Tally. Even turtles that have been found dead are important to the tally. **www.inaturalist.ca/projects/ontario-turtle-tally**

Donate

Donations allow us to continue our work in caring for injured turtles, conservation field studies, hatchling programs and public education. Visit **ontarioturtle.ca/donation-options** to find out how to support us financially.

We believe every person truly can make a difference!