



Slow Down! Royal Botanical Gardens asks Community to Help Protect Native Turtles

First Blanding's turtles to return from head-start program as part of recovery efforts

Hamilton, ON, June 21, 2022 — Nesting season is underway in the Hamilton/Burlington region, which means female turtles are on the move to find a place to lay their eggs. All four species of turtles still found at Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) are listed Species at Risk due to human impacts, including road mortality, urbanization, pollution, persecution, and poaching. RBG works to conserve native turtle populations through the Site-Specific Recovery Program.

Every nest counts. Most eggs will not reach maturity — it's estimated that for every 1,400 Snapping Turtle eggs laid, only one will survive to adulthood. We rely on community members to act responsibly when encountering wildlife, and report the location of nests or turtles on or adjacent to RBG land as soon as possible.

REPORTING TURTLES AT RBG

RBG is only able to respond to turtles found within or immediately adjacent to its properties. Turtles safe in water do not need to be reported

Nesting turtle: nesting-in-progress is an immediate report to RBG. If the turtle appears to be digging with its hind feet or perched with its rear end planted in the dirt, it is likely laying eggs. Give the turtles plenty of space — crowding may cause the turtle to abandon her nesting efforts.

Predated nest or dead turtle: important to report to RBG for our understanding of habitat use, nest success rates and mortality.

Turtle crossing the road: if it is safe for you to do so, [help the turtle cross](#) in the direction it was heading. If not, call the Dundas Turtle Watch hotline (289-775-1351).

Injured turtle: If you see blood, the turtle is injured. Healed injuries such as missing limbs do not require medical attention. Report it to the municipal Animal Services (Hamilton: 905-574-3433, Burlington: 905-335-3030).

Do not post the location of turtles/nests on social media; you can:

- Inform a RBG staff member or volunteer (if nearby).
- Privately message RBG on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#).
- Call RBG's front desk at 905-527-1158.

Remember the four W's when making your report:

Who: your full name and contact information; it will be kept private, we may need to follow up with you for more details.

What: how many turtles and what they are doing. Photos sent privately help our experts identify, locate, and determine the urgency of the report if you can take one without crowding the turtle.

Where: as specific a location as possible. Smart phone apps can pinpoint your exact location.

When: date and time of your observation. Timely reports are key!

Blanding's Turtles Return

RBG is excited for the return of 2020's cohort of Blanding's turtle hatchlings from [Scales Nature Park](#) later this year.

Recognized by their bright yellow throat, Blanding's turtles are the most threatened turtle species found locally. Since 2020, Blanding's turtle hatchlings recovered by RBG's Species at Risk (SAR) team were brought to a licensed and permitted head-start program at Scales Nature Park in Orillia.

Turtles remain at the facility for two years, allowing them a safe place to grow to a size less susceptible to predators. Like all recovered hatchlings, the cohort will be released to the nearest wetland area from where they were recovered. Although they have been given a leg up, these turtles will face a lot of challenges before they reach adulthood. Turtle conservation efforts and help from the community will be vital to create a healthy habitat where they can thrive.

For photos and additional information, see our [Media Kit](#)

Resources:

rbg.ca/turtles

[Turtles on the move \(blog\)](#)

[The Weather Network - Here's why experts advise against feeding wildlife](#) with Barb McKean, Head of Education at RBG

-30-

For media inquiries, please contact:

Emily Sharma,
Communications Coordinator,
Royal Botanical Gardens
905-527-1158 ext. 223
esharma@rbg.ca