



Wildlife Protocol for Road Construction/Rehabilitation Projects

General Provisions:

- Use caution when driving to and from the work site – watch out for turtles and other small animals on the road surface and shoulder. Avoid hitting them, provided that it is safe to do so.
- Ensure sediment and erosion control measures (i.e., silt fencing) are in place prior to beginning work. Inspect them regularly, and particularly after storm events, to ensure their effectiveness.
- Silt fencing may also be used to prevent turtles and other small animals from entering the work area. Lightweight silt fencing is preferred for this purpose (nylon netting on heavy duty silt fencing may entrap some species of wildlife). Make sure it is securely embedded at the bottom.
- Prior to beginning work each day, check for wildlife by conducting a thorough visual inspection of the work area and immediate surroundings.
- Restrict all activities, vehicles and materials to the designated work area.
- Litter and other waste materials must be appropriately contained and disposed of.
- Do not feed any wildlife or leave food out where it could attract them.
- Avoid or minimize disturbances to any natural features adjacent to the work area to the extent possible. DO NOT cut or damage any trees (of any size) unless the absence of Butternut (which is protected under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*) has been confirmed by an expert.

Wildlife Encounters:

- Do not harass or harm any wildlife.
- Turtles are among the most likely animals to occur on or adjacent to roads, especially during the spring. See attached Turtle Identification sheets for more information.
- Painted, Map and Snapping Turtles are protected under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997*. If one is encountered within the work area, it should be gently removed and placed in the roadside ditch at a safe distance from the work site. Wear gloves, or use a broom to steer the turtle into a bucket or other container. Handle with care to avoid injury to the turtle or yourself, particularly when dealing with Snapping Turtles, which may bite or scratch. Turtles may also wet themselves when handled. Inspect the silt fencing to determine whether repairs or extensions are needed.
- Blanding's, Spiny Softshell, Eastern Musk and Spotted Turtles are protected under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*. If one is seen near the work site, all work must **stop immediately**. Take a photograph of the animal if possible, to confirm the sighting, and contact the following people:
 - Erin Thompson, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources – Kemptville District, (613) 258-8366. Alternate contact is Heather Zurbrigg, (613) 258-8417.
 - City of Ottawa Project Manager.
- Barn Swallows and some bats are also protected under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*. If any Barn Swallow nests or roosting bats are found in or on a culvert or bridge, **stop work**, take a photo and contact the MNR and City Project Manager as above.
- Where work has stopped due to *Endangered Species Act* issues, it must remain stopped until authorised to resume by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Additional mitigation measures may be required by the Ministry.
- Snakes may also be found on or adjacent to roads. All of Ottawa's snakes are protected under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997*. None of our local species are venomous, so their bites are not dangerous. Some snakes will produce a foul-smelling musk when handled, instead of biting. Snakes will usually try to escape or hide when disturbed, and only defend themselves when trapped. If a snake is found in the work area, it should be gently removed or herded out to a safe location.

Turtle Identification

Turtles are usually found in or near water. During the spring and summer, however, turtles may travel overland to find new homes, search for food, or lay their eggs. Many turtles use the soft shoulders of roads for nesting, burying their eggs in the gravel. Eggs are usually laid in June and hatch in September, although some turtles may overwinter in the nest.

The turtles on this page are not protected under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*. They can be carefully removed from the work area if found.

Midland Painted Turtle

Smooth, low-domed shell up to 18 cm (7.5 in) long with reddish-orange patterns around margins. Head, tail and legs colourfully marked with yellow or reddish-orange stripes. Markings are brightest on young animals, fading with age.

Eggs hard-shelled, oval and white. Usually 2-14 eggs per nest. Hatchlings often stay in the nest until spring.



Northern Map Turtle

Medium to large turtle with a keeled shell (i.e., single ridge along spine) up to 28 cm (11 in) long with squiggly yellow markings and a jagged rear edge. Head, tail and legs are marked with yellow stripes. Markings are brightest on young animals, fading with age. Usually occurs only in large rivers such as the Rideau or Ottawa River.

Eggs hard-shelled, oval and white. Usually 10-16 eggs per nest.



Snapping Turtle

Large, bulky turtle with rough, ridged shell up to 45 cm (18 in) long. Uniform muddy greyish-brown to black in colour. Massive head, tail and legs cannot be fully withdrawn into shell. May bite if disturbed on land.

Eggs are rubbery and round, unlike other turtle eggs. Usually 20-40 eggs per nest.



Painted Turtles and Map Turtles can be picked up with one hand on each side of their bodies, between the front and rear legs. Snapping Turtles are much more likely to bite and scratch in self-defence and require different handling. Grip them firmly by the shell above each hind leg or use a push broom to steer them into a garbage pail or other large container for transport.

Release turtles in a safe location, within 125 m of the capture site if possible. Do not move turtles more than 250 m. Release sites should be near water, with vegetation cover for shelter. Place turtle gently on the ground (or slowly tilt the container over to allow the turtle to escape on its own).

Turtle Identification (continued)

The following turtles are protected under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*. STOP WORK immediately if one is seen in or near the work area. CALL MNR AND CITY PROJECT MANAGER.

Blanding's Turtle

Bright yellow chin and throat.
Highly domed, speckled shell up to 28 cm (11 in) in length.

Eggs small, oval and white.
Usually less than 12 eggs per nest.



Spiny Softshell

Flat, rubbery greenish-grey shell is unique among Ontario turtles. Can be up to 54 cm (21 in) long, with a very long neck and a pointed snout. Found in large rivers.

Eggs hard-shelled and round. May be up to 36 eggs per nest (usually 20).



Eastern Musk Turtle

Small turtle up to 13 cm (5 in) long, with yellow stripes on its head and neck. Dark shell may be smooth or ridged, often covered in algae. Tail is short, unlike that of young Snapping Turtles which it may otherwise resemble. May bite or release foul-smelling musk when disturbed.

Eggs hard-shelled, oval, off-white with a white band.
Nests under rotting stumps or in muskrat lodges.
Usually only 2-5 eggs per nest.



Spotted Turtle

Small turtle up to 13 cm (5 in) long, with bright yellow-orange markings on its dark head and limbs. Named for the bright yellow spots on its smooth, black shell, although these spots are not present on hatchlings and may fade with age.

Eggs rubbery, oval and few in number (usually 3-5 per nest).



Other Commonly Seen Species at Risk

Barn Swallow

Dark metallic blue above, buff to orange below. Long, deeply forked tail and pointed wings. Very quick and agile in flight. Cup-shaped nests built of mud and plant fibres on buildings and other structures, including bridge supports and culverts.



Male



Female



Nest

No other local swallows have such long, deeply forked tails.

Butternut

Also known as White Walnut. Each leaf has several pairs of leaflets on either side of the main stalk, and one leaflet at the tip. Leaves and twigs grow in an alternating pattern along the branches. The nuts resemble limes or lemons in shape, and have greenish-yellow fuzzy rinds covering a hard, brown ridged shell.



Butternut tree (centre)



Butternut leaves and fruit

Opened shell of butternut
(without rind)



The closely related Black Walnut, which is not a species at risk, has round nuts like tennis balls. Its leaves are very similar to Butternut's leaves, but the terminal leaflet at the tip of each leaf is often much smaller than the other leaflets, or missing entirely. Ash trees may also appear similar to Butternut at first, with very similar leaves, but ash leaves and twigs grow in opposite pairs rather than alternating.