

# How to be a Good Neighbor to Turtles



## Watch for Turtles in the Road

Keep an eye out for turtles crossing the road during the active season (April-October). If you find a turtle that is in the road or about to cross the road, you can save their life by helping them across the street in the direction they were headed.

Turtles have been on this earth for millions of years and know where they are going, so we always want to help them across the street in the direction they were headed and NO further. Studies have shown relocation drastically reduces reptiles chances of survival. Many of our native species are habitat specialists as well, so we could end up doing more damage trying to move them to a spot where we think they may want to go.

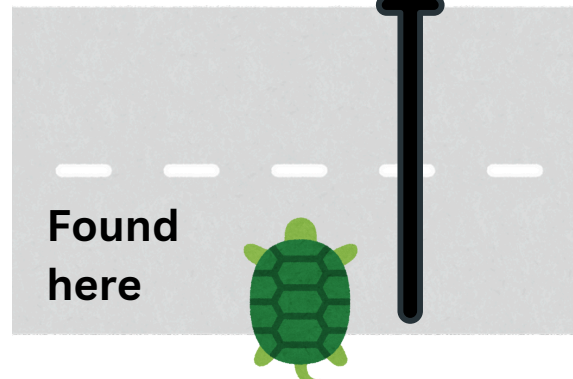
- ✓ ALWAYS move them in the direction they were headed
- ✗ NEVER pick up by the tail
- ✗ NEVER relocate



For most turtle species you can hold like a sandwich when helping them cross.

Snapping turtles require special handling, only touching the back 1/3rd of the body, due to their long reach with their necks. To be safe, you can hold all turtles this way, keeping your hands at the very back of the body.

Place here, safely off road



[NHTurtleRescue.org](http://NHTurtleRescue.org)

## Give them Space to Use your Yard

During May through July, female turtles are out looking for nesting spots. Turtles are very particular about where they nest, assessing conditions which will give her eggs the best chance at hatching. Often nesting spots become inaccessible, and she will travel far if needed. When turtles are disturbed from nesting they are likely to travel far, crossing roads and entering yards with dogs, risking their life.

If you see a turtle nesting in your yard, you may be literally saving her life by simply leaving her be. Keep pets away and she'll be gone within 24 hours, and she won't be back that year. Turtles do not receive parental care, so if the eggs become hatchlings, they are born with the strong instincts to guide them to the wetlands on their own.

It takes a LONG time for a female turtle to reach reproductive maturity. For a Blanding's turtles, that could be 21 years! It is incredibly important she remain in the wild year after year.

## Keep Wild Turtles Wild

It is critical to the survival of native turtle species that people do NOT take turtles from the wild. Be a turtle friend by observing their magnificence from a distance, and help spread the word that it is not okay to take turtles from their homes.

It is far too common for turtles to be kidnapped from the wild, which is contributing to the decline of reptile species globally. When a turtle is taken from the wild it is effectively dead to its population. This means there is now **NO** chance that individual can contribute to its population, or fill its critical role within that ecosystem. Turtle species can take 20+ years to reach reproductive maturity! Its so important they be left in the wild to contribute to the growth of their species.

Its also cruel to that turtle to take them from their homes. They do not want to be taken away from all they ever knew and loved and kept in an unfamiliar place. It is a huge disservice to that turtle and to the world when a turtle is taken from the wild.

## Supervise Pets During Nesting Season

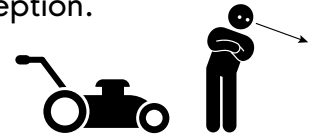
Our cuddly companions can be a big threat to wildlife when left unsupervised. Turtle shells are made of bone and dogs especially can do immense damage in a short time. Keep an eye on dogs when they are in the yard, especially during nesting season May-July, to prevent the situation where they find a turtle and think it's a toy for them to play with, having fatal consequences for that turtle.

## Support Land Conservation

While not everyone has the ability to do this, conserving land is the best way to protect turtle species for years to come. Sometimes when it comes time for us to release a turtle post-rehabilitation, habitat will have disappeared, leaving the turtle without a home. It is so critical for wildlife as well as humans that we protect the wetlands we have, as well as upland environments. If you have the means to protect a portion of your land, all wildlife will thank you. Another way to help is supporting your local Conservation Commission.

## Know Before You Mow

Do a survey of your yard before starting to mow - incidents with all types of species are very common, and turtles are no exception.



## Avoid Pesticides and Insecticides

Avoid harmful chemicals outside of your home. Turtles commonly develop ear abscesses when exposed to yard chemicals and these chemicals seep into waterbodies where turtles live. They are also indiscriminate and reduce food sources for wildlife.

## Create Artificial Nesting Habitat

NH Fish and Game works with landowners who have optimal turtle habitat to create nesting habitat which encourages turtles to stay in the area and not travel far for nesting, where they risk themselves crossing roads and entering yards with dogs. The closer the appropriate nesting spot to their home, the less they will need to travel.