

# Wood Turtle

*Glyptemys insculpta*

<b>STATUS</b>	Threatened 	Not Listed 
Threatened 	Threatened 	Not Listed 



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## Species Description

The Wood Turtle has a bumpy, sculpted shell that is dark grey to brown, with orange markings when wet. Its throat, tail, and underside of its limbs are orange-red. Hatchlings are light brown and toonie-sized, and adults are about 16-21 cm long.

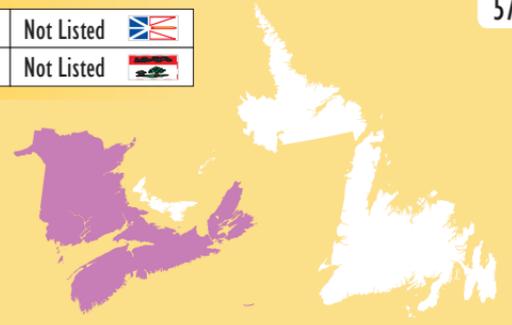


**carapace** (back):  
dark grey; orange  
markings (wet)



**plastron** (belly):  
yellowish; small  
black blotches

Wood turtles are found in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.



## Habitat

Found in clear, moderately moving rivers and tributaries in forests or flood plains. Also occurs in terrestrial habitats including riparian areas with dense low growing vegetation, forests, and hay and agricultural fields. Females lay their eggs in sandy bars along rivers and other gravel areas (driveways, roadsides, borrow pits) in June.



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Wood Turtles are the most terrestrial of the region's turtle species but are typically not found more than a few hundred metres away from water.

## Interesting Points

- For the first 15 years, age is determined by counting annuli (growth rings) on the plastron.
- Wood Turtles eat slugs, insects, green plants, grasses, mushrooms, and berries.



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Learn more about how you can help this species by searching “Protecting and Conserving Wood Turtles: A Stewardship Plan for Nova Scotia” in your internet browser.



Nesting female



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Eating a mushroom

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Painted turtle

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## Similar Species

Refer to page 54 to view descriptions and photos of the four species of turtles found in Atlantic Canada: Painted Turtle, Blanding’s Turtle, Wood Turtle and Snapping Turtle.

## Threats to Survival

- Mortality from vehicles and agricultural machinery.
- Illegal collection.
- Habitat loss and degradation, from increasing development along rivers, water course alteration, and farm expansion.
- Disturbance due to recreational activities in river and riparian areas.
- Nest predation.

## How You Can Help

Keep your eyes open for turtles on the road and drive carefully at all times. Report sightings! Create or maintain natural buffers along watercourses and drive OHVs on designated trails only. Farmers can raise agricultural machinery blades to a height of 10 cm to prevent injury to turtles. Leave wood turtles in their natural habitat and encourage the people around you to do the same.



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Researcher measuring turtle in agricultural field



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Wood turtle research

## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** NS DNR (902) 679-6091, or NB DNR (506) 453-3826

**Info:** [www.speciesatrisk.ca/woodturtle](http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/woodturtle), [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447 or [www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings](http://www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings)