

Turtles

- The **western painted turtle** (*Chrysemys picta belli*) is the only protected pond turtle in BC. The western painted turtle is a Schedule A animal under the *BC Wildlife Act*, and may not be captured or killed without a permit
- **Red-eared sliders** (*Trachemys scripta*) and other exotic species, like **snapping turtles**, have also been introduced through the pet trade and food markets; snapping turtles are Schedule C wildlife, while red-eared sliders are not protected as wildlife
- Turtles can carry *Salmonella* bacteria



Red-eared slider

Understanding Turtles

Red-eared sliders are often confused with painted turtles – sliders have a thin red stripe behind each eye, while painted turtles have no eye stripe. Painted turtles have red colouration along the edge of their bottom shell, while sliders have yellow undersides.

or park pond habitats. Turtles caught crossing roads during nesting can be gently picked up and moved across in the direction travelled.

Humane Choices

The BC SPCA does not support selling turtles as pets.

Relocating adult turtles is not recommended, and as per the *BC Wildlife Act* snapping turtles and red-eared sliders can't be relocated or released. There may be some limited re-homing options, but if there is no capacity then humane killing may be the only option. However, killing is rarely necessary to resolve nuisance conflicts and control methods should be selected to cause the least harm to the animal's welfare.

The BC SPCA strongly encourages non-lethal, non-contact methods. Prevention and exclusion comes first, and if necessary, eviction.

Did you know?

Turtles are carnivorous as juveniles, and are more herbivorous as they mature.

Snapping turtle

Turtles...

- western painted turtles have one clutch of eggs in summer, with 4 to 20 eggs
- babies hatch in late summer, and are fully independent after hatching
- **native turtles benefit local ecosystems**, cleaning water by eating algae, aquatic plants, insects, frogs, snails or small fish

Common Conflicts

Introduced turtles compete for habitat with the painted turtle and may move into backyard

Conflict Resolution

If animal is at risk, traps may be used for relocation of painted turtles within home range. Red-eared sliders, snapping turtles, and other pet turtles should never be released. For more information on addressing turtle conflicts, *flip page over*.



Recommended Actions & Methods

Prevention & Exclusion

Before any conflict, and to prevent future issues

Prevent spread of released pet turtles

- ✓ Do not release pet turtles in the wild, remove them from the environment if found

Capture

Red-eared sliders, snapping turtles, other escaped pets only

Capture

- ✓ Capture can be done by hand or using a net, or using traps such as a hoop trap or basking trap placed in water

Re-homing

- ✓ Place in the care of an experienced guardian if one is available

Humane killing

- ✓ Humane killing should be carried out by a professional such as a veterinarian or wildlife rehabilitator

These are legal, regulated methods - but they are **not recommended*** as they can cause animal suffering, may be high risk to non-targets, and/or are difficult to administer; legality must also be confirmed according to local bylaws and/or regulations

- Manually applied blunt trauma that induces immediate unconsciousness
- 2-stage injection of MS-222 (TMS), buffered solution followed by unbuffered solution

*email wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca for information on these methods

It is **illegal** to use...

- Freezing (including dry ice)
- Poison
- Pithing
- Drowning
- Electrocution
- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide
- Decapitation



Red-eared slider



Western painted turtle

