

Be a Good Neighbor to Cape May Point Turtles

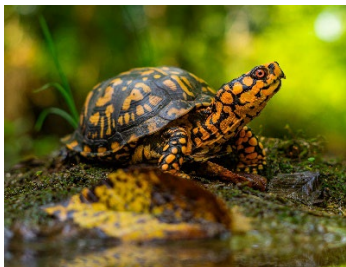
There are 13 different turtle species found in New Jersey with Painted turtles and red-eared sliders being the most common.

There are two things that you can do in the coming weeks to help our resident turtles: 1) Help turtles safely cross roads, AND 2) Build a “turtle cage” to protect buried turtle eggs shortly after they are laid.

All of New Jersey’s turtle species lay eggs by digging a hole in the ground, depositing the eggs, and then covering the nest with soil. Turtles sometimes travel long distances, crossing roadways to find just the right spot to lay eggs.



Painted Turtle



Eastern Box Turtle



Snapping Turtle

Turtles Crossing the Road

Helping turtles get safely across roads is vital to protecting their populations. Motorists can help by driving with extra caution and following these guidelines:

- Allow turtles to safely cross roads **unaided** if a lack of traffic allows them to do so.
- Handle turtles gently and avoid excessive handling if it is necessary to pick them up. Most turtles can be picked up by the side of their shells near the mid-point of the body. Do not pick up a turtle by its tail, as doing so may frighten or injure the reptile.
- Move the turtle **in the direction that it is heading**. It may seem helpful to assist the turtle by moving it to a nearby waterbody, but the turtle may not be heading toward water.
- **Only experienced handlers should ever attempt to lift a snapping turtle.** The safest way to assist snapping turtles is to use branches or similar objects to prod them along from behind.
- Never take a turtle into your personal possession. All native turtles are protected in New Jersey.
- Do not disturb a nesting turtle and keep children and pets away from it.

Building a Turtle Cage

If you discover a turtle nesting on your property, leave the nest where it is and protect it from predators with a “nest cage.” Do NOT relocate the eggs; the eggs will most likely be destroyed.

Using a few supplies and following these easy steps, you can build a nest cage that protects the eggs and hatchlings from predation while letting the hatchlings escape.

Depending on the species and weather conditions, hatchlings may begin to emerge as soon as two months, although three months is more typical. After a successful hatch, there is often a small hole where the hatchlings emerged from their nest. If you find egg shells outside of the nest cavity, this is an indication the nest was raided by a predator.

When and how long to keep a nest cage in place

Predation of a turtle nest can occur at any time, so ideally the nest cage would be installed immediately, within minutes of the female leaving the area, and kept up until the hatchlings emerge.

Click [HERE](#) for instructions.



The Environmental Commission thanks you for being a good neighbor to our resident turtles!

To learn more about New Jersey’s turtles, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com/ensp/herps_info.htm