

Ecosystem Regulators

MIDLAND AND EASTERN PAINTED TURTLE

CHRYSEMYS PICTA MARGINATA X C. P. PICTA

SNAPPING TURTLE

CHELYDRA SERPENTINA

NORTHERN MAP TURTLE

GRAPTEMYS GEOGRAPHICA

WOOD TURTLE

GLYPTHEMYS INSCULPTA

BLANDING'S TURTLE

EMYDOIDEA BLANDINGII

Main Benefits for Agriculture

Turtles are omnivores; they therefore eat a wide variety of foods. Their presence is an **indicator of the health of aquatic habitats** and the surrounding biodiversity in agricultural environments.

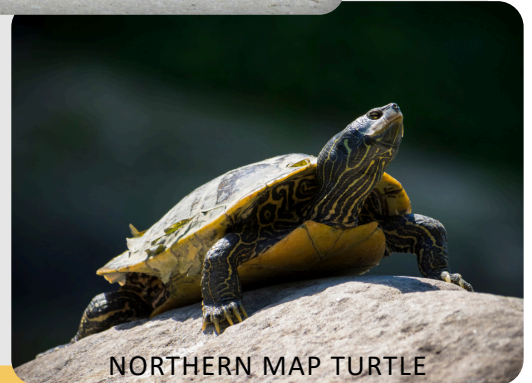
By feeding on aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates, turtles help **maintain balance in the food chain**. They indirectly benefit agricultural crops by limiting the population of certain pests and supporting a diverse, stable ecosystem.

Improving water quality: The snapping turtle, for example, can feed on dead fish and other carrion, preserving water quality and keeping aquatic and riparian ecosystems in balance. They also prey on muskrats, reducing the potential damage these rodents can cause in agricultural environments, namely by blocking drains, destabilizing riverbanks, and grazing on crops and vegetation along riparian buffers.

By reducing pest pressure and helping maintain healthy ecosystems, turtles play **a vital role in ecosystem regulation**, contributing to the preservation of a stable environment that promotes crop growth.



SNAPPING TURTLE



NORTHERN MAP TURTLE

Habitats

- Wetlands (marshes, swamps, wet meadows) and other **waterbodies** (shorelines, agricultural ditches, riparian buffers): for breeding, thermoregulation, travelling, and feeding.
- Fallow land, grasslands, and pastureland: for nesting, travelling, and feeding.

Did you know?

Like humans, turtles grow slowly and take a long time to reach reproductive maturity. This makes each individual essential to the survival of the species.

Legal Status :

Since 2010, the wood turtle has been listed as threatened. Since 2021, Blanding's turtle has been listed as endangered. The northern map turtle, snapping turtle, and midland and eastern painted turtle have been listed as species of special concern since 2005, 2011, and 2021, respectively. These turtles are listed on Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act.

What You Can Do To Help Turtles

Preserving Habitats

Maintain a **wide and diverse riparian buffer** along shorelines and ditches

Reduce **pesticide use** to avoid contamination of wetlands and waterways

Encouraging Breeding

Identify **open areas** that could serve as egg-laying sites and leave them undisturbed

Reducing Mortality

-Avoid working the soil and using machinery in potential egg-laying sites **between April and October**, an active and critical reproduction period

-Be especially careful when driving near **ditches and wetlands**

-Increase mowing height to at least **15 cm** and reduce speed to less than **10 km/h**



References :

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