

# Turtles in Oregon

Oregon has two native species of turtles: the western pond turtle and the western painted turtle. Both are highlighted in the Oregon Conservation Strategy as species in need of help—that is, they have low or declining populations.

## Western Pond Turtle

**Habitat:** Pond turtles prefer marshes, streams, rivers, ponds and lakes. They need sparse vegetation nearby for digging nests and like to bask on logs.

**Lives:** Coast Range, East Cascades, Klamath Mountains, West Cascades and Willamette Valley ecoregions.

**Fun fact:** This turtle, which can live more than 30 years in the wild, may overwinter on dry land.



## Western Painted Turtle

**Habitat:** This turtle needs marshy ponds, small lakes, slow-moving streams, and quiet off-channel portions of rivers. It prefers waters with muddy bottoms with aquatic vegetation. Open ground for nesting and logs for basking help keep this species healthy.

**Lives:** In Blue Mountains and Willamette Valley ecoregions. In the Columbia Plateau, East Cascades and West Cascades ecoregions, it lives only along the Columbia River.

**Fun fact:** While hatchlings are only about the size of a quarter, individuals can live 20 years or more.



## Non-native turtles

Non-native turtles compete with native turtles for basking sites and are known to introduce disease that has resulted in localized die-offs of native turtle populations. The two species Oregon biologists are concerned about are snapping turtles and red-eared sliders. Never buy or release either of these turtles in the wild. Call your local ODFW office if you have one of these species or if you see one.

## Common Snapping Turtle

The common snapping turtle, indigenous to the eastern United States, can reach up to 18" in length. Its top shell is strongly serrated and varies from tan/brown to olive to almost black. Its long tail has three rows of saw-tooth keels.

It is illegal in the state to buy, sell, possess or release this non-native turtle. If you've just realized you are in possession of a non-native turtle, contact your local ODFW office.

For more information, see Oregon Administrative Rules, Division 56, [IMPORTATION, POSSESSION, CONFINEMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND SALE OF NONNATIVE WILDLIFE](#).



## Red-Eared Slider

The Red-Eared Slider is also a turtle from the eastern U.S. It has a dark shell, yellow stripes on the neck and legs, and a bright red patch just behind the eye.

It is illegal in the state to buy, sell, possess or release this non-native turtle. If you've just realized you are in possession of a non-native turtle, contact your local ODFW office.

For more information, see Oregon Administrative Rules, Division 56, [IMPORTATION, POSSESSION, CONFINEMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND SALE OF NONNATIVE WILDLIFE](#).



## Have you seen a turtle in Oregon?

Let us know by completing an online form. Biologists are working on an updated census of Willamette Valley turtles. Visit the [Native Turtles of Oregon website](#) and let us know.