

Dear Educator / Interpreter,

Thank you for your interest in this curriculum-based education package and the plight of turtles in Ontario and across Canada.

Please find enclosed:      Poster "Turtles of Ontario"  
                                 Laminated identification guide "Turtles of Ontario"  
                                 "Snappy Survivor" Poster

This curriculum resource contains six Units with educational activities, and a seventh Unit containing the glossary and appendices. Each of the first six Units begins with a table describing the Science Expectations met within the Unit. We suggest you first glance at Appendix 4: Curriculum Expectations, in Unit Seven. Appendix 4 lists the Science Expectations of each activity in this booklet, along with a brief description of the activities and the appropriate grade level.

If you would like to extend your lessons outside of the classroom, see Appendix 3: Zoo Tours with Curriculum Links. It explains how to take your class on a tour of the zoo focused around the Ontario Science and Technology curriculums.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive our quarterly newsletter, *Amphibian Voice*, or if you have any further questions, please write, fax, or e-mail (electronic option also available) your request along with your name and full address to:

Adopt-A-Pond Coordinator  
361A Old Finch Avenue  
Scarborough, Ontario  
M1B 5K7  
Tel: (416) 392-5999  
Fax: (416) 392-4979  
E-mail: [aap@torontozoo.ca](mailto:aap@torontozoo.ca)

Our webpage has additional resources: [www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond](http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond)

We thank you for your participation in Toronto Zoo's conservation programs. We welcome feedback about your use of these materials.

Sincerely,

Bob Johnson  
Curator of Reptiles and Amphibians  
Toronto Zoo

Lisa Sealock  
Adopt-A-Pond Coordinator  
Toronto Zoo

**“Our task must be to free ourselves...  
by widening our circle of compassion  
to embrace all living creatures...”**

**Albert Einstein**



# TEACHERS!

This resource will:



Incorporate lessons on the biology and ecology of Ontario turtles into the Life Systems Science strands of Grades One through Seven.



Provide fun, easy, cross-curricular Science and Technology, Language Arts, Health and Physical Education, and Visual Arts activities that can be easily adapted to suit any elementary grade level or interpretative experience.



Help you to create your own unit on turtles and conservation issues related to these species.



Help you and your students acquire an appreciation for wildlife as well as foster the values of community-based conservation.



Provide opportunities for your school/class to access wildlife and green spaces.

# INTRODUCTION

Ontario is home to eight magnificent turtle species, each with unique and fascinating characteristics. For example, the Blanding's turtle is known for its longevity (some say it can live up to 70 years), while the common snapping turtle is the largest freshwater turtle in Canada. The northern map turtle has a shell "mapped" with yellow lines, while the common musk turtle emits a musky odour that has given it the nicknamed 'Stinkpot.' The colourful painted turtle has yellow and red stripes, and the spotted turtle has bright yellow or orange spots. The eastern spiny softshell turtle uses the neat trick of burying itself in sand to elude predators. The softshell turtle, considered highly intelligent, actually stomps the ground to make earthworms surface in its quest for food.

Unfortunately, many of these turtle species are at risk of extinction. In Ontario, species at risk may be listed either provincially or nationally, or both. In Ontario, species at risk are listed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. A Ministry technical committee, called the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (**COSSARO**), evaluates candidate species for listing and makes recommendations for placing species in the appropriate provincial conservation category. At the national level, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (**COSEWIC**), a committee of scientific experts, assesses and designates which wild species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada. The work of **COSSARO** integrates with and complements the work of **COSEWIC**. View the provincially-designated species at risk online at: <http://www.rom.on.ca/ontario/risk.php> and the **COSEWIC**-designated species at <http://www.cosewic.gc.ca>. Six of the eight turtle species that live in Ontario are designated at risk by **COSEWIC**. Of these six, three are also designated at risk provincially in Ontario.

This curriculum resource includes seven Units on various topics related to Ontario turtles. Each Unit begins with a table on the Science Expectations met within the Unit.

- Unit One: Turtles of Ontario – this Unit contains fact sheets on each Ontario turtle species, including their *at risk* status;
- Unit Two: Turtle Biology – this Unit describes such characteristics as turtle habitat, physical attributes, and nesting behaviour;
- Unit Three: Turtle Ecology – this Unit talks about activities like hibernation, food preferences, and turtles' place on the food chain;
- Unit Four: Ethics and Culture – this Unit discusses the prominent place of turtles in the myths and legends of cultures around the world;
- Unit Five: Turtle Conservation – this Unit focuses on efforts to recover turtle populations in Canada and abroad, including the rare leatherback turtle.
- Unit Six: Additional Resources – This Unit contains activities to help students learn more about the many types of turtles throughout the world and turtle behaviour;
- Unit Seven: Glossary and Appendices – This Unit defines terms used in the curriculum, lists references, provides information on how to take tours at Toronto Zoo, and has a table on the curriculum expectations fulfilled in this booklet.