

## Help protect turtles during turtle nesting season

### Build a nest cage, report road crossings and keep wild turtles wild

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is asking the public to give turtle mothers and the next generation of turtles a helping hand by following a few easy actions on World Turtle Day, May 23, and the throughout turtle nesting season.

This time of year, turtles are beginning to emerge from rivers, lakes, and wetlands to lay eggs. Wisconsin's 11 turtle species lay eggs in nests from late May through June in sunny and well-draining uplands, where they are highly visible along roads and in residential yards. Many females are run over by vehicles during these annual nesting migrations, a leading cause of turtle decline throughout Wisconsin. Turtle nests also experience high

levels of predation as populations of nest-raiding animals such as raccoons, skunks and coyotes have grown beyond historical levels.

"The nesting season is a really tough time to be a turtle mother. Many are removed from the population by car collisions on roads, while some protected species are illegally taken from the wild and sold in the illegal pet trade," said Andrew Badje, DNR Conservation Biologist. "Protecting adult females and turtle nests in the wild are the best ways to conserve turtle populations in Wisconsin."

Wisconsin's protected turtle species face additional challenges. Wood turtles and Blanding's turtles cannot reproduce until they reach 12 to 20

years, and ornate box turtles tend to produce few eggs each year. Therefore, the removal or death of even one female turtle per year can lead to population declines or the elimination of local populations.

The DNR encourages people to consider following these protective actions from now until the end of July:

- \* Build a nest cage to protect turtle eggs and hatchlings if turtles are nesting on your property. A nest cage that keeps predators out and allows hatchlings to exit on their own.

- \* Drive with caution on roads that are near wetlands, lakes, and rivers. Slow down, be alert and reduce distractions.

- \* Report turtle observations, road crossings

and nest sites using the Turtle Reporting Form for the DNR's Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program. DNR conservation biologists use these reports to manage and conserve turtles more effectively.

- \* Report suspicious illegal activity associated with turtles to the DNR's Violation Hotline by calling or texting (800)847-9367.

- \* Help protect Wisconsin's native turtles by keeping wild turtles in the wild.

- \* Learn additional ways you can help to further protect Wisconsin's turtles.

Learn more about turtles in Wisconsin on the DNR's Turtle Conservation Program webpage.

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## DNR asks anglers to share details of muskellunge fishing trips

If you're fishing for muskellunge this year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources wants to hear from you. The DNR is asking people who fish for muskie to help with its ongoing efforts to investigate these fish by reporting through the DNR's online muskellunge angler survey.

Since 2014, this survey has gathered information about muskie angler demographics and catch data, such as length of fish caught, angler effort, body of water fished and methods used. Fisheries managers have used this data to recommend fishing regulation changes to the Michigan Natural Resources Commission,

evaluate the muskellunge stocking program and understand more about self-sustaining populations.

Whether their trip resulted in a catch or not, anglers can offer valuable information about their fishing experience. People may fill out one survey per person, per trip and are encouraged

to complete a survey for each muskellunge fishing trip they make.

"The reports we receive from anglers are essential because muskellunge are so elusive in our netting and electrofishing sampling efforts," said Cory Kovacs, DNR fisheries biologist in Newberry. "The reports help us make future fisheries manage-

ment decisions and understand more about their populations."

Muskellunge season is open to catch and immediate release year-round, with the possession season opening statewide the first Saturday in June.

For additional season dates and fish length limits, see the 2022

Michigan Fishing Guide at [Michigan.gov/DNRDigests](http://Michigan.gov/DNRDigests).

As a reminder, anglers are limited to taking only one muskellunge per license year and are required to register their harvest by calling 888-636-7778 or online at [Michigan.gov/RegisterFish](http://Michigan.gov/RegisterFish).



Photo credit: Wisconsin DNR  
Hunters and outdoor enthusiasts are encouraged to participate in the final year of a study on West Nile virus in ruffed grouse.

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