

Angler Survey for Turtle Observations

Turtle populations have declined worldwide and turtles are considered to be one of the taxonomic groups most at risk of extinction. In co-operation with the New Brunswick Museum we are conducting turtle research to determine the distribution and status of turtle species in the Saint John area. We have already established that both Snapping and Eastern Painted Turtles exist within Saint John, and we are now trying to identify the extent of threats to these populations. Some of the threats we have identified include: road mortality, collection/relocation, introduced pathogens, interactions with exotic species, subsidized predators (animals such as raccoons that have higher populations due to humans), and angling accidents.

It has been documented that turtles are occasionally accidentally caught by anglers. Because turtles have evolved to be a long-lived species that require a high adult survivorship, their populations are very susceptible to any additional mortality pressures. Unnatural losses of even small numbers of adult turtles can cause populations to crash. This survey is designed to gauge the frequency of turtle bycatch by anglers, and the extent of hook injuries. We are planning to use this information to develop best practices to minimize angling impact on turtle populations.

Survey Questions:

1. Have you ever seen a turtle in the wild? If yes, go to question 2. If not, go to question 4:
2.
 - a) Where?
 - b) When?
 - c) What species? Or provide description if possible.
 - d) Was it on a hook? If yes, go to question 3. If no, go to question 4.
3.
 - a) What fish species were you trying to catch?
 - b) What hook type was used (e.g., single barbed hook, single barbless hook, lure/spinner with treble hook, lure/spinner with single hook, fly)?
 - c) What bait was being used?
 - d) What month and approximate time of day did you catch the turtle?

e) Was the hook swallowed (or not visible at least), caught in the mouth, or caught on the body of the turtle? Please provide additional details on the hook location if possible.

f) Were you able to remove the hook?

g) Was the hook easily removed?

4. Have you ever heard of anyone else catching a turtle on a hook?

5. If we require additional details, can we contact you? If so, please provide your name and contact information.

6. Please provide any additional information that you feel may be useful for our research.

**Please email your survey question responses to:
Constance.Browne@nbm-mnb.ca**

Or mail to:
Connie Browne
New Brunswick Museum
277 Douglas Avenue,
Saint John, New Brunswick,
E2K 1E5

Thank-you for helping us with our research!



Dr. Connie Browne
NBM Research Associate - Herpetology



Andrew Sullivan
Biologist – Turtle Project

Funding provided by the New Brunswick Museum, Rockwood Park, New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund, and the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund. To help support projects like this, please consider purchasing conservation plates when you purchase a vehicle.



New Brunswick Museum
277 Douglas Avenue,
Saint John, New Brunswick,
E2K 1E5

New Brunswick Museum Website: www.nbm-mnb.ca

Turtle Project Website: <http://cbrowne0.wix.com/cbrowne#!about3/c1job>