



Spotted Turtle

Clemmys guttata

Curve Lake First Nation Species at Risk

Features: The Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*) is named for the distinctive bright yellow spots on its black upper shell or carapace. This relatively small turtle prefers ponds, marshes and bogs with an abundant supply of aquatic vegetation. Shortly after emerging from hibernation burrows in spring, adults congregate at favoured ponds to mate. Females lay eggs in soil and leaf litter in wooded areas close to wetlands. Turtles remain active until the fall when they again form groups and hibernate underground.

Status: Endangered Provincially and Nationally

Range: The Spotted Turtle occurs in eastern North America, from Maine and Ontario south to Florida, west to Michigan. In Ontario, it is widespread but very localized in southern Ontario. It is known from about 75 locations in Ontario. [Range Maps](#)

Threats: The Spotted Turtle is vulnerable to habitat alteration by humans, nest predation by raccoons, and pollution. As it produces small clutches of eggs which have low hatching success, the ability of Spotted Turtle populations to recover from declines is limited, and very slow. They are subject to illegal collection for the pet trade, and are especially susceptible when they congregate in spring and fall.

Protection: The Spotted Turtle is listed as endangered under the provincial *Endangered Species Act*, 2007. The Act prohibits the harming, collecting, possessing, trading or killing of this species. Spotted Turtles are protected under Ontario's *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*. About one-third of Ontario's Spotted Turtle populations are on public lands, where they are afforded protection, as in national or provincial parks.

Text Sources: [Litzgus 2004](#); [Oldham 1991](#); [Cook 1984](#)

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