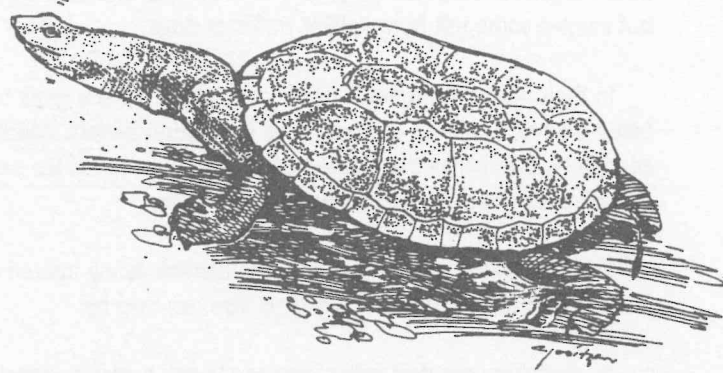


WESTERN LONG-NECKED TURTLE

(*Chelodina oblonga*)



Description: The black shell (carapace) of the western long-necked turtle is oval-shaped, and in adults can reach a length of 26 cm. When they first hatch, the turtles have a carapace about the size of a 20 cent piece. The long, sinuous neck is almost the same length as the carapace, so fully grown adults can reach a total length of nearly half a metre.

Habit: Long-necked turtles are found in freshwater systems, and are often seen around swamps and streams in the Perth metropolitan area. They are most conspicuous in spring and summer when females leave the water to lay their eggs. The female lays 2–16 leathery, elliptical eggs in a hole excavated with her back feet. Incubation can take from 26–41 weeks. They are carnivorous. Hatchlings eat small crustaceans, adults prey on fish and frogs, and some large adults have been known to attack waterfowl.

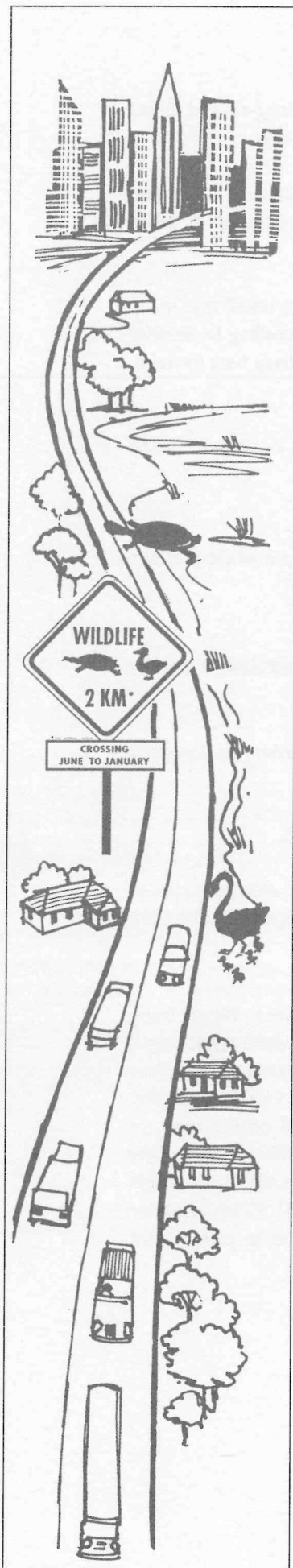
Status and distribution: This common, protected species is found from Perth metropolitan area as far north as Hill River, inland to Toodyay, Pingelly and Katanning and east along the south coast to the Fitzgerald River National Park.



Department of Conservation and Land Management



MAIN ROADS
Western Australia



WILDLIFE CROSSING ROADS

Between September and early January each year, adult female western long-necked turtles leave the safety of water in search of suitable nearby sandy soils to lay their eggs.

Banksia woodlands near Bibra Lake are ideal nesting sites. Front gardens of some homes and business premises surrounding many of the wetlands in and around Perth are attractive to turtles but involve some risk from vehicle traffic or dogs.

In their search for suitable nesting sites turtles often cross busy roadways, resulting in many being injured or killed. Following the incubation period, which can vary according to weather conditions, hatchlings then have to find their way across the same busy roadway back to water. This occurs between June and August each year.

To help reduce the number of these animals being injured and killed on local roads, CALM and Main Roads need your assistance. You can help by:

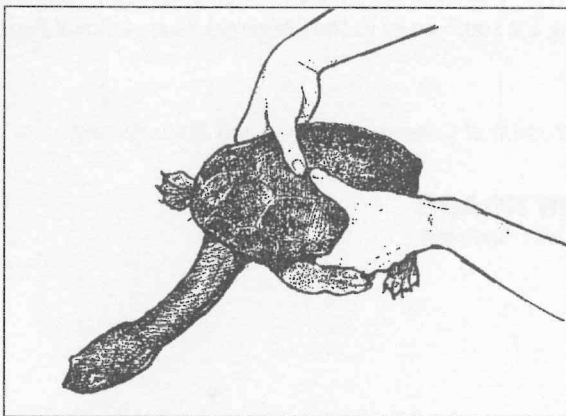
- ❖ keeping your dog away from egg laying turtles and their nests;
- ❖ picking turtles up if they become trapped in your yard and placing them where they can walk back to the wetland unimpeded; and
- ❖ driving carefully to avoid turtles on the road.

When handling these animals keep clear of their hind legs which have small claws that could cause a minor scratch.

Some metropolitan lakes where this seasonal activity occurs include Lake Monger, Herdsman Lake, North Lake, Bibra Lake, Hyde Lake and Shenton Park Lake.

DO NOT GO ONTO OR NEAR THE EDGE OF ANY ROAD TO RESCUE A TURTLE.

Drivers are being asked to take care by driving slowly in these areas and allowing turtles to cross the road. Extreme caution should be exercised by anyone crossing a road with a turtle. Wait for traffic to clear.



Correct way to hold a turtle

For more information: People living close to wetlands where signposting is considered inadequate can call Main Roads on (08) 9311 8333. If you find an injured animal on the road, or would like more information on how to handle a turtle, call CALM's wildlife enquiries on (08) 9334 0224 for advice or directions to your nearest wildlife carer.



Department of Conservation and Land Management



MAIN ROADS
Western Australia