



## For More Information Contact

wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca  
BC SPCA Animal Helpline  
1.855.622.7722

**BCSPCA**  
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

# TURTLES

## WILDLIFE CONTROL BEST PRACTICES

### Species & Legal Designation

Western painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta belli*), Schedule A, *BC Wildlife Act*  
Red-eared sliders (*Trachemys scripta*), not considered wildlife  
Snapping turtles (family *Chelydridae*), Schedule C, *BC Wildlife Act*

### Disease Risks

Turtles can carry *Salmonella* bacteria



Red-eared sliders, Photo Credit: Beth Christopher

## Common Conflicts

Exotic turtles like red-eared sliders and snapping turtles compete for habitat with the painted turtle, and may move in to backyard or park ponds.

During egg-laying season, turtles may get caught crossing roads. These turtles can be gently picked up and moved across in the direction they are travelling. If painted turtles are in danger because of their location (due to construction, etc), traps may be used to relocate them within appropriate habitat in their home range.

## Western Painted Turtle

The Western painted turtle is the only protected pond turtle in BC. They are often confused with red-eared sliders, which are an exotic species introduced through the pet trade and food markets. Sliders have a thin red stripe behind each eye, while painted turtles have no eye stripe. Painted turtles have red along the edge of their bottom shell, and sliders have yellowish undersides with no red.

## Conflict Prevention

Prevent the spread of released pet turtles by never releasing them in the wild, and remove them from the environment if found. It is illegal to capture or kill painted turtles without a permit. Snapping turtles and red-eared sliders can't be relocated or released. If released/escaped pet turtles can't be rehomed with an appropriate guardian, or there is no capacity elsewhere, humane killing may be the only option.

Western Painted Turtle



Red-eared Slider



Photo Credit: Laurie Schretlen







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PRACTICES



Snapping turtle



### RECOMMENDED

#### Actions & methods for control

Red-eared sliders, snapping turtles and other escaped pets should be captured by hand, by using a net, or using traps such as a hoop trap or basking trap placed in water. If handling snapping turtles, use caution as their head can reach very far back, and up to 2/3 of their body length ahead of them. Only pick up snapping turtles by the shell behind their back legs or from underneath using a board or box. If available, escaped pets can be re-homed with an experienced guardian. If humane killing is necessary, refer to a professional such as a veterinarian or wildlife rehabilitator.



### NOT RECOMMENDED

#### Actions & methods for control

These are legal, regulated methods for controlling turtles, but they are not recommended as they can cause suffering, may be high risk to non-targets, and/or are difficult to administer; check local bylaws and/or regulations to confirm whether the method is legal in a municipality.

- 2-Stage injection of MS-222 (TMS buffered solution followed by unbuffered
- Blunt force trauma



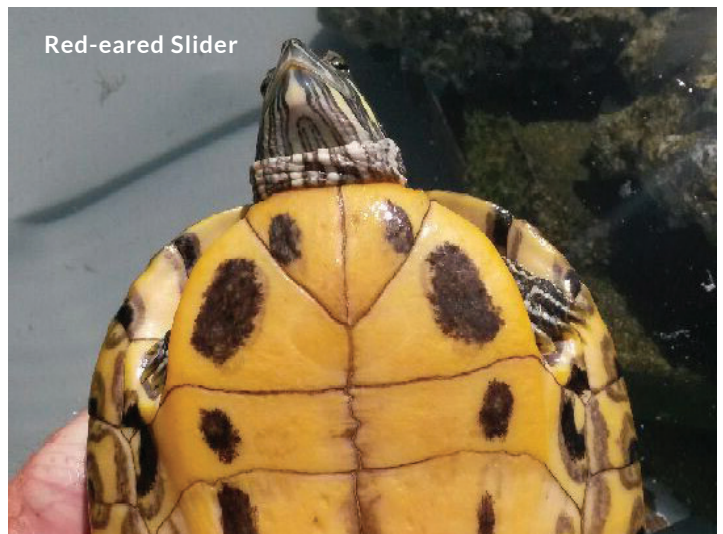
### ILLEGAL

#### Actions & methods for control

- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide
- Decapitation
- Drowning
- Electrocutation
- Freezing (including dry ice)
- Pithing
- Poison



Western Painted Turtle



Red-eared Slider

Photo Credit: Nina Simunovic