



What to do if you find an injured or ill turtle.

What do I do with this Turtle???

Observe the turtle before you handle it.

The following questions will help you recognize whether the turtle is most likely injured or ill. If you answer YES to any of these questions, the turtle does need medical attention and should be taken immediately to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

- Has the turtle been hit by a car? If safe to do so, remove turtle from the road, carefully lifting the animal. Take any fragments of the shell that may be near the turtle. (Believe it or not, turtle shells can be repaired)
- Does the turtle have eyes that are swollen shut, or have discharge coming from its nose?
- Are the eyes sunken or cloudy looking?
- Is there a large lump on the side of the turtle's head? Or large lumps on the legs or skin between the legs and head, or legs and body?
- Is the turtle's shell damaged- broken, cracked or injured? If so is the damaged area healed over, or is it open, raw or bloody? If healed over and the turtle seems active and alert, the turtle should be left alone.
- Should you pick up the turtle, notice its weight. A healthy turtle feels heavy for its size, and solid (similar to a rock of the same size).
- Is the turtle crossing, or about to cross a busy roadway? If safe to do so, place the animal on the side of the road in the direction it was heading. Turtles will only turn around and re-cross the road if you place them on the side they were leaving!
- The easiest way to transport an ill or injured turtle is in a cardboard box.

Did you know?

- ❖ Turtle populations are in serious decline throughout the world due to loss of habitat and the pet trade.
- ❖ The most common turtles in East Tennessee are the Eastern box turtle, Eastern painted turtle and the common snapping turtle.
- ❖ Turtles are able to care for themselves from birth. Hatchlings do not need to be saved unless in physical danger. In that case, move the turtle to a safe location near where found.
- ❖ Box turtles often crawl onto roads on rainy mornings in search for food. Drive slowly and watch out for them especially around curves.
- ❖ Any turtle in pain may try to bite! If you must pick up a turtle, firmly lift by grasping the sides of the shell with the tail toward you.
- ❖ Do not lift a turtle by the tail as this could cause spinal damage.

Source: TN Wildlife Resource Agency

PHONE NUMBERS

TN Wildlife Resource Agency 1-800-332-0900

Wildlife Rehabilitation- It is against state and federal law to keep wild animals. Wildlife Rehabilitators are licensed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to care for animals until such time they can be released back into the wild. No one without a license should keep any wild animal captive. Wild animals require special diets and care, and pose hidden dangers such as the risk of disease to people. Wildlife Rehabilitators attend workshops sponsored by national organizations such as the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association or the International Wildlife Rehabilitators Council to further their knowledge. Most Rehabilitators are unpaid volunteers.