



Severn Sound Environmental Association

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MATCHEDASH BAY TURTLE SPECIES AT RISK RESOURCES FOR MUNICIPALITIES *

Matchedash Bay is a wetland of provincial and international significance, and is habitat for common and rare plants, fish, mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles, including species at risk (SAR) turtles. The Matchedash Bay turtle project is being undertaken in partnership with Georgian Bay Forever, and includes turtle monitoring, enhancing turtle habitat and managing invasive species, and increasing awareness of actions that can help protect SAR turtles and their habitat. Information and resources are provided below for consideration with respect to native turtle species; Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA) recognizes that municipalities may have additional factors, such as human safety and integrity of infrastructure, to consider when working near turtle habitat.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs) FOR ROADS & TRAILS NEAR TURTLE HABITAT

[Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamii Biosphere - BMPs Working in SAR Habitat](#) – best management practices when working in species at risk habitat to reduce threats to SAR and other wildlife; includes guidance on timing windows of non-critical periods for public work activities in Appendix 2.

[Turtle Guardians - BMP Turtle Nests Municipal Guide](#) – best management practices for protecting turtle nests during road maintenance activities, from Turtle Guardians; guidelines for road crews and municipalities on how to reduce harm to turtles and their nests, including timing, handling, and conservation-focused practices.

[Ontario government Reptile and Amphibian Exclusion Fencing](#) – overview of design and installation guidelines for fencing to exclude turtles and other reptiles and amphibians.

*These resources are for lower-tier and upper-tier municipal staff that may encounter turtles when working in the Matchedash Bay area of Severn Sound; additional resources are available for the public. Information is current as of March 19, 2026.

[Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry - BMP Mitigating Effects of Roads on SAR](#) - best management practices for mitigating effects of roads on amphibians and reptiles, including species at risk.

[Think Turtle Conservation Initiative - The Impact of Shoulder Grading](#) – explanation of the impact of road shoulder grading on turtle nesting and survival; highlights best practices municipalities can follow to reduce harm to turtles and support conservation efforts.

[Ontario Invasive Plant Council - Clean Equipment Protocol](#) - instructions on how and when to clean equipment to reduce impacts from invasive species.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER TURTLES

Always ensure your own safety first!

[Canadian Wildlife Federation - Helping Turtles Safely Cross the Road](#) – short video demonstration of how to safely help turtles across roads.

Reporting SAR, nesting, injured or dead turtles:

- **DO NOT PUBLICLY DISCLOSE LOCATIONS of turtles** – it's highly sensitive information and confidentiality is essential to reduce risk of illegal poaching, disturbance, or habitat degradation. **You should however report locations directly to the organizations below** – they have taken data sensitivity training and/or have permits for turtle research.
- If possible, note GPS coordinates or details of the exact location (e.g., street address), to pass on to
- If it is safe to do so, take photos of the turtle (top and bottom of shell, and face) to include with your report, this can be very helpful to researchers.

In the SSEA area, report turtles to: START hotline (phone or text 705-955-4284) and/or SSEA (705-534-7283). Outside of the SSEA area, report to: Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre (705-741-5000)

[Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre - Injured Turtle](#) - information and emergency phone number to call if you encounter living, injured or deceased turtles, or turtle eggs.

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OTHER RESOURCES

Report invasive species observations to [SSEA](mailto:invasives@severnsound.ca) (705-534-7283 or invasives@severnsound.ca)

[Georgian Bay Forever](http://info@gbf.org) – partner with SSEA on Matchedash Bay project (905-880-4945; info@gbf.org)

[Scales Nature Park - Saving Turtles At Risk Today \(START\) Project](#) - overview of the START project goals and targeted species.

[Province of Ontario - Endangered Species Act \(ESA\)](#) – Ontario’s rules around threatened and endangered species are in transition. In 2025, changes to the ESA were made under Bill 5, and it is anticipated that in 2026 the ESA will be repealed and the new *Species Conservation Act, 2025* will be implemented. Information related to SAR may have to be revised as details are released by the Province.

[Province of Ontario - List of SAR](#) - The official list (periodically updated) of Species At Risk (SAR) plants and animals in Ontario – can be searched and sorted. Tip: click on a species for more detailed information on its status, identification, habitat, and links to documents such as assessment reports and recovery strategies

[Federal Species At Risk information](#) – Info on Canada’s Species at Risk program, including resources and tools related to protecting and conserving wildlife and plant species at risk across the country.

[Long Point Basin Land Trust - Turtle I.D](#) – identification features for 7 of the 8 native turtle species of Ontario

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