

WHY ARE THEY THREATENED?

Although the Eastern long-necked Turtle spends most of its time in the water, they often travel over land in search of new waterholes and nesting areas and can be known to travel very long distances in search of a new home. Travelling from one water body to another, their biggest threat is therefore crossing roads, where they can be injured or killed.



Photo: Murray Sayle



One of the greatest threats to these turtles are feral foxes digging up nests to eat the eggs and killing adult turtles on land, often when females come out of the water to lay their eggs.

In winter, turtles become dormant, residing under leaves or logs.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You can play a role in helping your local turtles by:

- Recording sightings and nesting locations using TurtleSAT (<https://turtlesat.org.au/turtlesat/map.aspx>)
- Protecting nests from predators
- Volunteering with a local Bushcare or Rivercare / StreamWatch group
- Looking out for turtles on the road in wet stormy conditions or between October and January

DID YOU KNOW?

They often get the name 'stinker'!

This is because they have a great defence mechanism for predators - if they feel frightened, they can eject a foul-smelling liquid from glands above each leg that they can spray more than 3 feet to repel predators!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
WILDLIFE IN PARRAMATTA.
PLEASE SCAN HERE:

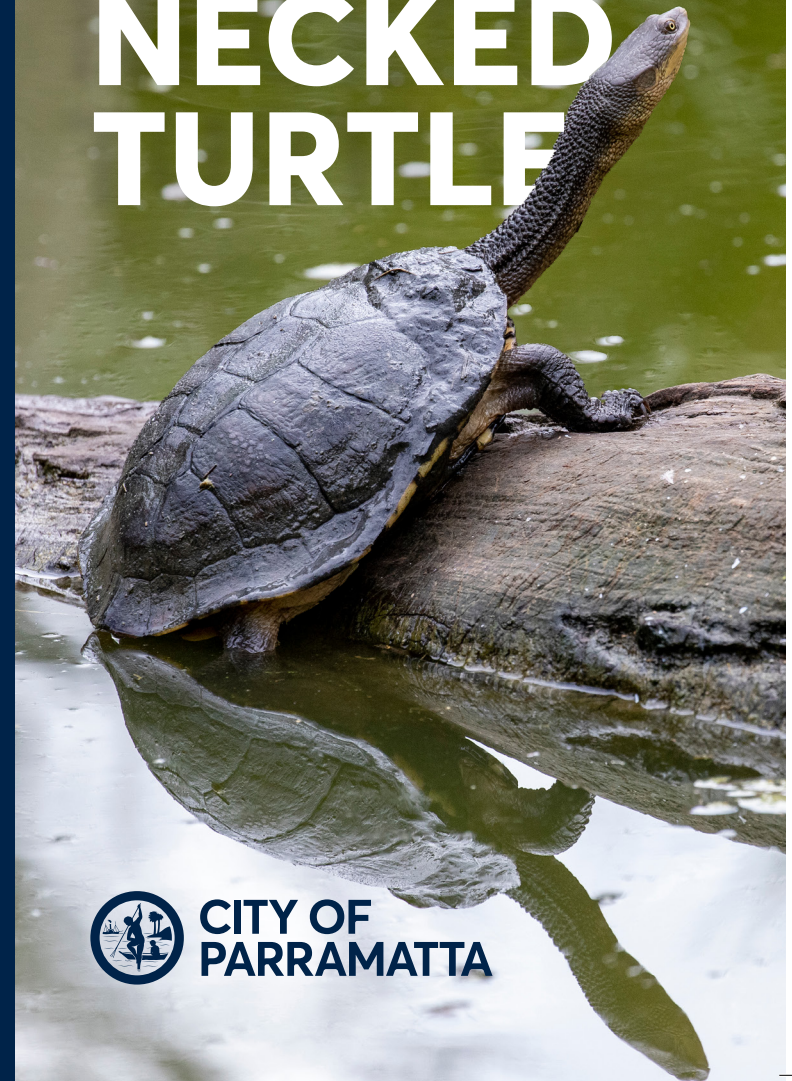


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EASTERN LONG- NECKED TURTLE



The Eastern Long-necked Turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*) is one of 23 Australian freshwater turtle species and is the most widespread turtle in south-eastern Australia. They can be found in any body of water, including Lake Parramatta. They live in a broad range of freshwater aquatic habitats, but are more abundant in shallow, ephemeral wetlands often remote from permanent rivers.

WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?



The Eastern Long-necked Turtle has a shell length of 25cm on average. As its name suggests, this turtle has a long neck, which can grow up to half the length of its carapace (shell) or sometimes even longer than its shell! Turtles spend a lot of time in water, as opposed to tortoises, which spend most of their time on land, so this turtle has webbed feet used for swimming and digging.

Their shell (carapace) is oval-shaped and the top can vary in colour from light brown to almost black. Their lower shell (plastron) is usually creamy-yellow, with distinct dark brown/black markings. Males grow to almost 1 kg and females sometimes grow to more than 1.5 kg.

WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

The Eastern Long-necked Turtle is the most widespread turtle in south-eastern Australia. They live in slow-moving freshwater habitats, including wetlands along the East coast of Australia. They can be found in any body of freshwater, including rivers, wetlands lakes, swamps and dams.

Turtles spend most of their life submerged on the water's edge, searching for worms and snails, and prefer a soft sandy area with nearby logs or rocks to bask on. They move across land in groups of up to several dozen. Heavy rain or very dry weather can trigger their migration to a new water source, meaning they are vulnerable to being run over by moving across roads.



Photo:
Anne Carey

Photo: Richard O'Brien

HOW DO THEY BREED?

The Eastern Long-necked Turtle will breed during Summer from December to February. The males and females will engage in head bobbing as they prepare to mate. Female turtles dig holes in sand or soft sediment along stream banks and lay about ten eggs each year. These eggs take 2-3 months to hatch. Hatchlings will then emerge to take shelter in nearby water, where they can be identified by distinct orange or red spots on their underbelly.

In winter, turtles become dormant, residing under leaves or logs.

WHAT DO THEY EAT?

These turtles are carnivores and have a diverse diet, based on what is available at the time. They often feed on aquatic invertebrates, tadpoles, frogs, yabbies and small fish. They use their long neck to rapidly strike at passing prey, similar to a snake. They can tear apart large food items using their strong front claws.



Photo: Murray Sayle

Photo:
Corrine Carpentier

With strong jaws, they can have quite a nasty bite so be sure not to touch or aggravate them!