

Wildcare  
Helpline:  
**9474 9055**

City of  
Rockingham:  
**9528 0333**

Naragebup  
Environmental  
Centre:  
**9591 3077**



# NOT SO NINJA TURTLES

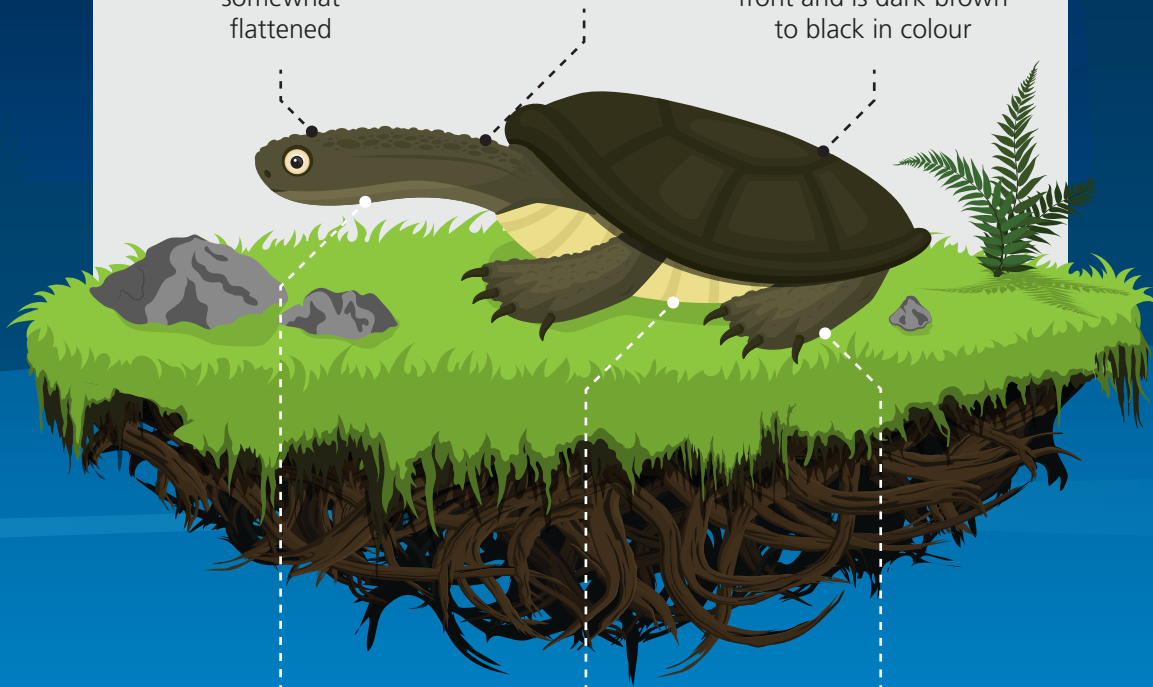
A guide to helping our local turtles thrive.

The Southwestern snake-necked turtle (*Chelodina colliei*), is an apex predator, plays a vital role in aquatic ecosystems and also helps to control insect populations.

**The head is streamlined,** elongated and somewhat flattened

**A long neck** which can be up to 20cm long

**Distinctive oblong shell** narrowed slightly at the front and is dark-brown to black in colour



**The skin is olive-grey colour** with dark mottling on the upper side

**Underside of the body is yellow** to pale off-white

The limbs have distinct ankle joints and **webbed feet, with four claws**

## DID YOU KNOW



Adults can reach up to **50cm in total body length**



They can live for **over 40 years!**



Males are generally **smaller than females**



rockingham.wa.gov.au

## WHERE ARE THEY FOUND?

*Chelodina colliei* is endemic to South West WA and is the only native freshwater turtle species found in the Perth metropolitan region.

They can be found in most wetlands and lakes within the City.



## WHAT DO THEY DO AND WHY ARE THEY UNDER THREAT?



Turtles are freshwater dwelling reptiles and live in wetlands and seasonal waterbodies.



Mature freshwater turtles are known for their hardiness and ability to live and thrive in a wide range of conditions, however, they are still vulnerable.



Females lay up to three clutches of 2 -16 leathery eggs which take 26 - 41 weeks to hatch.



Introduced species impose greater competition for resources and many prey on hatchlings.



During the summer turtles are able to aestivate by burying themselves or hiding under logs and using stored body energy reserves. This makes them more susceptible to predation and land clearing.



Females travel up to a kilometre to find a suitable nesting site. They are more vulnerable during this time as many have to travel across parks and roads.



Hatchlings have an approximately 30mm long shell and are particularly at risk of predation by dogs, cats, foxes and crows, and being hit by cars during their journey back to their wetland homes.



The nesting season is from **September to January**.

## THREATS

Injury by traffic



Habitat loss and fragmentation



Illegal capture



Predation by dogs and foxes



Invasive species



Poor water quality



Drying climate



Man-made pollution



## YOU CAN HELP!

- 1 > Keep dogs on leash when walking near wetlands to prevent disturbing nesting females.
- 2 > Keep cats indoors to help protect hatchlings.
- 3 > Be mindful when driving on roads near wetlands especially during nesting season (September to January).
- 4 > Record your sightings on the climate watch website [climatewatch.org.au](https://climatewatch.org.au) or by contacting the City's Environmental Planning Officer on **9528 0333**.
- 5 > Dispose of unwanted aquarium species responsibly.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A TURTLE?

Check if the turtle is safe and unharmed, keep as much distance as possible and stay behind the turtle. Keep dogs on leash. If on the road try to escort the turtle without picking it up.

If the turtle is nesting or on her way to nest, she should not be disturbed or picked up. Otherwise the turtle could abandon her nesting effort.

If you can see the turtle has been injured or in distress, contact the Wildcare Helpline (9474 9055) who can put you in touch with a wildlife carer.

If required to move the turtle, to prevent injury to yourself and undue stress for the turtle, it is best to hold it from the tail end of the shell with a firm grasp. Support the head if necessary.