



www.turtleoblonganetwork.org.au

What to do if you find a long necked turtle

The **Turtle *Oblonga* Network's** aim is to ensure every turtle receives *professional and compassionate care*.

The **Network's** services include -

- Rescue of long necked, oblong turtles
- Rehabilitation of sick, injured and displaced oblong turtles
- Advisory service for the community, and wetland managers
- Community education through information dissemination and displays
- Workshops and training for wildlife professionals



Found or rescued oblong turtles

We are keen to have information on any oblong turtles found and/or rescued, whether **dead or alive** to establish patterns and collate data. Information required includes -

- Carapace length, weight and gender
- Where and why they are found / rescued / injured

All this information assists in building up a picture of what's going on in our oblong turtle populations.

If injured or in poor health, we'll take it into care where it will be rehabilitated before being returned to its home lake. If the home lake is unsuitable we will relocate the animal to a healthier lake. If you would like to be involved, where possible, we will include you in the relocation-release.

A turtle out of water, is a turtle at risk

The busiest months for turtle admissions are Aug-Sep for hatchlings, and Oct-Nov for nesting females.

Oblong turtles are freshwater turtles so if they are found in the lower reaches of the Swan River (below the Causeway) or on an ocean beach they will need to be rescued. Turtles turn up in surprising places but generally there's a lake or wetland nearby. As turtles disperse from the lakes many are killed on the roads.

If this occurs in your area contact your council to request that some temporary warning signage is erected. Also contact the **Turtle *Oblonga* Network** which may be able to assist with volunteers to protect the turtles by helping them across roads.

Oblong turtles found wandering on land may be dehydrated and will be stressed. Please rescue the turtle and call the **Turtle Oblonga Network** immediately. Don't leave the turtle where it is, or put it into the water, as even minutes later it is unlikely we will be able to find the animal again.

The turtle will be dirty but other than a gentle rinse, please don't attempt to clean it because the shell is as sensitive as skin.

If uninjured, place the turtle in an uncontaminated container of clean shallow water, sufficient to cover the feet. Turtles are air-breathers; if weak and unable to keep its head up, it may drown if placed in water deeper than about five centimetres, or 2 inches. Cover the container with a towel, and locate it in dark, quiet place, away from domestic machinery, children, dogs, and flies. This will allow the turtle to de-stress until we can respond to your call. We will examine the animal before returning it to its home lake, if it is uninjured and in good health.



from *Caring for Australian Wildlife*

When **handling** turtles be prepared for them to squirm strongly; take care not to drop them when this happens. If you are nervous about this use something like small towel which will make the turtle less slippery – use both hands as shown. The turtle will not bite and is unlikely to do more than scratch you with its claws in its efforts to escape your grasp.

If you see a uninjured turtle crossing a road.

If safe to do so, please carry the turtle in the direction it was heading. If a turtle is heading away from a water-body it may be a nesting female, particularly during Oct-Nov. If a turtle is heading toward a water-body please carry the turtle all the way to the safety of the water.

If you find an injured turtle

- Rescue the animal and call the **Turtle Oblonga Network** immediately. **Please do not put the animal in water.**
- Do not leave it as it will be at risk and we may not be able to find it even minutes later.
- Weak or injured turtles are at risk of being preyed upon by Ravens and in warm weather, injured turtles are also at risk of becoming fly-blown in a very short time
- The shell is living bone therefore any shell wounds will be painful. If the shell is cracked, the animal will probably also have broken bones.
- If it was attacked by a dog it will have puncture wounds which may have pierced vital organs, including the lungs

Depending on the injuries, we may ask you to take the turtle straight to a vet to have the injuries assessed. Keep the animal in a secure container with a damp towel in the base so that it doesn't slip around increasing its pain. Cover the animal with a damp hand towel. It helps us greatly if you're able to photograph any injuries and send them to us when you call.

If you find a turtle hatchling.

Turtle nests can be laid some distance from a water-body, and that distance can pose a number of hazards for tiny turtle hatchlings making their way to the water.

Just picking the hatchling up and placing it in fringing vegetation in the nearest water body may increase its chances of survival by up to 90% as it is on the journey from the nest to the water that they are most at risk from cyclists on bike paths, birds (mainly Ravens), traffic, road kerbs & drains, being trapped in thick couch grass and being in the path of the large mowers used on the grassed areas around lakes. If the hatchling appears to be dead, or if you have any concerns at all about the hatchling, please don't hesitate to call us for rescue and/or advice; apparently 'dead' hatchlings can revive and go on to thrive.

If you do help a hatchling(s) to a water-body, we'd still like to hear from you as we record all such incidents to build on our body of data about these animals - when and where they're found, etc

If you find a turtle laying eggs, please safe guard her until she's finished laying, 15 - 30 minutes; it's a fascinating process. Finally, we ask that you carry her back to the nearby lake so that she doesn't have to risk her life on the roads in her exhausted state; the turtle won't appreciate this gesture, but we will.

If you find a turtle egg(s), please leave the turtle eggs undisturbed (do not handle as turtle eggs must not be rotated) and call the **Turtle *Oblonga* Network** which has the expertise and facilities to relocate and incubate the eggs if viable. The Network can also advise on protecting any turtle nests found in your garden. Ravens are the main predators, along with foxes in bushland areas.

Report a Poacher

It is illegal to poach (steal), fish, trap, or kill any native fauna which includes turtles.

Why are turtles poached? For food consumption, smuggling and profit on the black market.

If you see anyone at your local lake with spears, nets, traps, buckets or containers, be suspicious.

Without taking any risks, photograph the individuals along with any car registration plates in the vicinity. Please report any suspected poaching as soon as possible to DPaW via the 7 day Wildlife Care Helpline on 9474 9055, the Bayswater council rangers and/or your 24 hour Security Service.

Emergency phone numbers (please don't text)

Please add these emergency numbers to your mobile phone so that you always have them to hand

For help, rescue and advice with wild turtle issues

0414 476 867 East Metro • 0424 727 624 South Metro • 0424 727 411 North Metro

*If, for any reason, the Turtle Oblonga number in your area doesn't answer,
please call one of the other numbers*

0428 984 445 Albany • 0438 813 919 Margaret River • 0437 910 054 Busselton

For sick, injured or orphaned wildlife and to report suspicious, malicious or illegal wildlife activity including poaching, trapping and hunting please call

7-day Statewide *Wildcare Helpline*

9474 9055

DONATIONS TO HELP FUND OUR TURTLE RESCUES

Our unfunded Network is made up of volunteers; we rely on sporadic grants, grass-roots fundraising, donations and, mostly, our household budgets to fund our volunteer work. Although we operate on a shoestring we do need funds to pay for veterinary consumables and housing/husbandry equipment such as tubs, pumps, filters, water heaters, etc.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation toward our work, donations may be made via ***Give Now***.



<http://www.givenow.com.au/turtleoblonganetwork>

If you would like to contribute hands-on toward our work, please take the time to look at our website which includes a downloadable membership application.



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