



# SIX WAYS YOU CAN HELP WILD TURTLES

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*The U.S. has more turtle species than any other country, but many populations are dramatically declining due to habitat loss, road mortality, and illegal collection. We need your help!*

## 1: PROTECT TURTLES' PRIVACY: DON'T SHARE SPECIFICS.

Only post general locations of wild turtles online (ex. County it was found in). Specific locations like parks and roadsides could lead turtle poachers to a site.

## 2: GET THE SHELL OFF THE ROAD.

If it's safe, help turtles cross roads in the direction they are heading. Don't move them to a different location.

## 3: LEAVE TURTLES IN THEIR HOMES.

Wild turtles have complex needs and are unlikely to fare well in captivity without specialized veterinary care. Wild turtles can carry diseases that can be transmissible to people or pets, like salmonella.

## 4: REHOME UNWANTED PETS, OR TAKE TO A SHELTER.

Never release pet turtles in the wild! Your pet is unlikely to survive in the wild, and it could harm other wildlife by introducing diseases, even if it seems healthy. Contact local animal shelters, rescues, or post an ad at a local pet store to rehome your pet.

## 5: REPORT WILDLIFE CRIME.

Familiarize yourself with state and national laws that protect native turtles and regulate their possession and collection. In some states, it's illegal to collect any native turtle. Share what you learn and report suspicious behavior. See reverse side.

## 6: HELP TURTLES THRIVE IN NATURE.

Look for volunteer opportunities to support turtle habitat in your community or at home. Planting native vegetation, or joining clean-up efforts in parks, woods, and along waterways, are simple ways to help many kinds of wildlife now and in the future.



# TURTLE IN TROUBLE?

→ Call for Help! ←

## CALL IN THE PROS TO HELP INJURED WILDLIFE:

If you find an injured turtle, call your local animal control officer, veterinarian, or humane society for help locating a certified wildlife rehabilitator who is qualified to provide care. Go to **Animal Help Now**: <https://ahnow.org/>

## REPORT SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR

If you suspect someone is illegally collecting or selling wild turtles, call the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's tip line: **1-844-FWS-TIPS**. You can report anonymously. The Service is authorized to pay rewards for information that leads to an arrest, a criminal conviction, civil penalty assessment, or forfeiture of seized property. Learn more: [fws.gov/story/how-report-wildlife-crime](https://fws.gov/story/how-report-wildlife-crime).

## SUSPICIOUS SIGNS:

- People with bags, poking around in wetlands and along streams, or flipping over logs and rocks.
- Cars parked near forested areas with collection equipment (like nets and containers) visible inside.
- Sheets of metal or plywood that have been laid on the ground to attract reptiles and amphibians.
- Unmarked traps set in wetlands. Traps for research will be clearly marked. (Some states do allow limited trapping for certain species.)
- Unattended backpacks or bags left in the woods, along a trail, or near roads. Don't ever open a suspicious bag or container - report it to authorities.



1-844-FWS-TIPS  
FWS\_TIPS@FWS.GOV



## DO & DO NOT:

- **DO:** Maintain a safe distance and protect yourself.
- **DO:** Note the exact location, what happened, and who was involved (persons, vehicles, and other witnesses).
- **DO:** Take photos (if safe).
- **DO NOT:** Approach or confront.
- **DO NOT:** Open suspicious bags or containers

#BUYINFORMED  
#KEEPTURTLESWILD  
#EVERYTURTLECOUNTS



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