

THE FRESHWATER TURTLE TIMES

**1 MILLION TURTLES COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAM UPDATES,
RESEARCH INSIGHTS AND MORE**



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AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM
**EUREKA
PRIZES**
2023 WINNER

COUNTING DOWN TO TURTLE MONTH 2023

The countdown is on for Turtle Month 2023 this November! In WA, turtles are already starting to nest and nesting will be soon starting across SA, VIC, NSW and QLD as large rain events are expected through October and November. Hopefully, we can reduce the number of females that are hit by cars which means that they won't make it safely to and from the nesting grounds. They often come out when it's dark and wet after rain, and are not always easy to see on the roads if people are not expecting them. Please help us to spread the word for everyone to keep an eye out on the roads at this time.

Get Involved, Get Trained, Protect Turtle Nests

If you are near a known turtle nesting hotspot, or would like to help look for nests after big rainfall events in October and November - you can give the turtle babies the best chance to hatch by protecting their nests. If you need some support with this or have questions, reach out to us at 1millionturtles@1millionturtles.com

Learn more about nest protection and complete the training by clicking below.

[Click Here](#)



Turtle Month Call-to-Action - Starting Now

We need your help!

This turtle month, we would love your help to make the new 'Turtle Nest Predictor tool' even better by helping us to ground truth it. This tool enables you to identify potential or existing nesting sites of freshwater turtles in Australia. These sites can then be prioritised for turtle conservation actions. The tool uses data from TurtleSAT and/or, vegetation and habitat characteristics to predict the turtle nesting hotspots.

Is ground truthing complicated?

Not at all, but it does require a little bit of your time. To start, you will need to pick one or more turtle nesting hotspot locations (using the Turtle Nest Predictor tool) and get there to document the habitat and vegetation characteristics, and also check if there are any turtles nesting at that spot. When you arrive at your location, you could randomly select certain spots or stop at every 100 metres or more to record data. You could also take some photos of the ground, tree cover (facing upwards), and the surrounding (left and right) (photos are optional). Finally, you will submit your data to TurtleSAT (see next page for more details about the type of data you can submit).

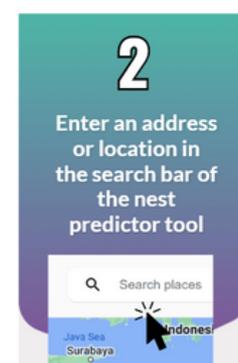
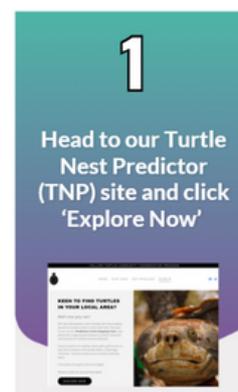
You could do as much or little as you want. For example, you could do this at just one location and document a few spots there, or cover one different location every week. Every record counts and your contributions make a difference!

How will I know which area to target for ground truthing?

To search for hotspots in your local area to target, go to the 'Turtle Nest Predictor tool' (scan QR code on right) and enter a specific address or the name of your suburb. Hotspots will be displayed as a red layer on the map and you will see that many of the hotspots are located near water bodies such as creeks, rivers or lakes. However, some may be near urbanised locations like parks, playgrounds or walkways. Some tips to help you get started:

- (1) Ensure you have registered for a [TurtleSAT](#) account.
- (2) Go to the ['Turtle Nest Predictor' tool page](#) to learn more and how to use it. Access the tool by clicking 'Explore More'.
- (3) Now, search for your desired location by entering it into the search bar at the top of the page.

Every bit counts!



Scan to visit Turtle Nest Predictor page

(4) On the map, select and note the hotspots that you would like to visit and ground truth - for example, you may opt to select a location nearby, or a location that has minimal or no TurtleSAT entries - i.e., coloured dots = turtle sightings.

(5) Upon arrival at your location, ensure that it is accessible (not on private property) and is safe. [You could also opt to or revisit these locations after a significant rain event as turtles often come out to nest after a good rainfall.](#)

(6) Ensure to bring your phone along and have TurtleSAT open.

(7) Take photos of the surroundings (optional) even if no turtles are around or of a turtle if found nesting (please keep a safe distance from the nesting turtle and do not approach).

(8) Submit your data (and photos) to TurtleSAT.

What is Ground Truthing?

The facts that are validated when a location shown on a map or satellite image is checked on the ground.



Add data

What information would you like to add?

- Turtle Sighting
- Turtle Nest Location
- National Nest Predation Survey (Chicken Egg Experiment)

If you have a photograph of this turtle sighting, please upload it

No file chosen

Date observed *

Time observed *

Click on the map or type your coordinates:

Latitude *

Longitude *



Number of turtles within 10m of your location *

- None seen

What data should I enter?

If there are no turtles there:

- Open TurtleSAT
- Select 'Turtle Sighting'
- If you have taken photos of the surroundings, upload them
- Now, select 'None Seen' and submit

If you see a turtle nesting:

- Open TurtleSAT
- Select 'Turtle Sighting'
- Upload your photo (s) of the turtle nesting - but please keep your distance and refrain from approaching the nesting female
- Select the number of turtles nesting there
- Select species if known
- Select 'Yes' to 'Was the turtle nesting question' and submit
- You may also add more information if desired

Did you know that 'None Seen' reported in TurtleSAT is very valuable for ground truthing? Why?

Your 'None Seen' data helps to refine the reliability of the hotspot locations being displayed in the Turtle Nest Predictor tool, fill in data gaps and verify existing records - hence improving the tool's overall effectiveness. However, if you come across a nesting turtle, please keep your distance and minimise any disturbances such as noise levels. Once you are at a safe distance away from the nesting female turtle, note the location and submit your sighting to TurtleSAT. You can learn more about nesting and how you can get trained to help protect their nests by [clicking here](#).

This call-to-action is a great activity to do alone or with your family and friends as a fun day out helping our turtles! We hope that you will get involved this November and beyond. In fact, you can start anytime now. For any questions, please reach out to us at 1millionturtles@1millionturtles.com

Upcoming 1MT Events

Don't miss our online Turtle Month Webinar on 25 OCT 2023!

Every year, our 1 Million Turtles program hosts this webinar to share what's new, program progress and research updates, and give some tips and ideas on how you can help turtles this November. This year, this webinar will be taking place on the 25th of October from 6:30pm to 7:30pm (Sydney time), online via Zoom.

Registration is now open- to attend, [please click here](#)

In this webinar, you will:

- Learn more about the new 'Turtle Nest Predictor Tool', watch a live demo to see how you can use it to find local turtle nesting hotspots and how you can help us make this tool even better.
- Learn more about our final program evaluation and how you can contribute through your feedback.
- Get program updates, achievements and interesting turtle research insights.
- Actions you can take to help our turtles in November.
- A 'Q & A' session where you can ask any questions about turtles and their conservation, or even share anything interesting or cool things you have been doing or observed about turtles.

Lunch and Chat Webinar: Using Nest Predictor Tool for Fox Management on 24 OCT 2023

Join A/Prof Ricky Spencer at this upcoming 'Lunch and Chat' webinar for an engaging afternoon of knowledge sharing and exploring opportunities to optimise fox management (using tools developed by the 1 Million Turtles). Enjoy lunch at your desk while we will explore how you can use the Turtle Nest Predictor Tool, watch a live demo of this tool, along with other tools such as the National Nest Predation Survey and TurtleSAT, to complement fox management initiatives.

This webinar is a **great opportunity for staff from Local Councils, LGAs and Land or Natural Resource Management agencies** to explore how fox management initiatives could benefit from the various tools that were developed and used by 1 Million Turtles.

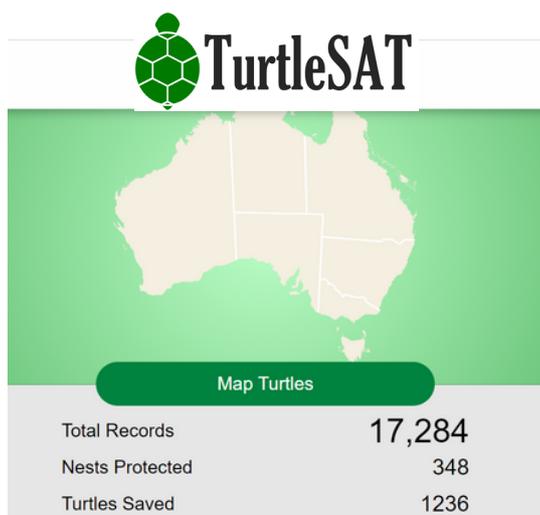
Date/Time: Tuesday, 24 October 2023, from 12pm to 1pm (Sydney time), online via Zoom

To register, [please click here](#).

TurtleSAT Updates

The total number of records has surpassed over 17,000! A big round of applause to you all as this data is useful for informing many local actions and national decisions that drive freshwater turtle conservation.

Interpretive turtle signages, including turtle road crossing signages (example shown in the photo), are also going up near waterways in many Council areas. These interpretive signages include a QR code that links to TurtleSAT encouraging submissions of turtle sightings. As more people are made aware of their local turtles and the importance of including their sightings on to the national freshwater turtle database - we are seeing evidence of new records starting to come in from many of those signage locations.



The most recent records on TurtleSAT - as of 9 Oct 2023



Patrick Tegart, Environmental Officer Biodiversity Projects and Community Education from Wingecarribee Shire Council NSW - holding up their brand new turtle road signages.

Get Trained and Help Protect Turtle Nests



As turtle nesting starts, now is a great time to get trained to help protect freshwater turtle nests. As nesting increases, so does the impact from foxes as they dig up the nests to consume turtle eggs. Your help really matters.

To earn more and start your training, [please click here](#)

If you have any questions about nest protection or other queries please email us at: 1millionturtles@1millionturtles.com

Expert Advice

from Dr Shane Simpson
The Unusual Pet Vets
in Victoria



Turtle and Fishing Hooks

What to do about turtles and fishing hooks with Dr Shane Simpson from 'The Unusual Pet Vets'

Freshwater turtles often become hooked on fishing lines when people are fishing in lakes and rivers. This is a very distressing situation to all involved and often people are not sure what to do next.

So, we reached out to Dr Shane Simpson in Victoria for his advice. Dr Simpson regularly presents on the topic of reptile and amphibian medicine and surgery to fellow veterinarians, veterinary nurses and reptile keepers both in Australia and internationally. In addition, he has contributed to several veterinary text books, held positions on animal ethics committees and does a considerable amount of work training wildlife rehabilitators about caring for injured reptiles.

This is what he shared...

Hook stuck in turtle mouth

If the fishing hook is stuck in the mouth, and a member of the public is able to remove the hook easily, they should do so and immediately release the turtle.

Hook swallowed and difficult to remove

If the hook cannot be removed easily or has been swallowed, then the member of the public should cut the line leaving about 20-30cm from the turtle's mouth (see image below). Then immediately take the turtle to a vet for the hook to be safely removed. In such cases, it is likely that the turtle will need to be anaesthetised for the hook to be removed. If a vet is unsure about what to do, they will normally contact us (The Unusual Pet Vets if in Victoria) or a zoo.

Important to note

There are no good or bad hooks. People used to think that the older types of hooks would just rust away inside the turtle. However, I have personally seen some pretty horrific injuries by leaving these sorts of hooks in place. The stainless-steel hooks last forever! I recommend the removal of all hooks for these reasons.

Hope that helps.

Regards,
Dr Shane Simpson
[Visit his profile](#)



Photo Credit: [The Daily Telegraph](#), 'Turtle Hooked and Helped by WIRES', published 8 Feb 2018.

Do you have a community or research story to share?

We are really keen to share the turtle conservation achievements of groups and individuals around Australia. If you would like to share your group's activities in a future newsletter, please let us know via 1millionturtles@1millionturtles.com and include 'newsletter update' in your subject heading.

And don't forget to tag us @1millionturtles on Facebook if you are sharing your turtle photos, activities and stories.

To Find Out More

Visit our 1 Million Turtles <https://1millionturtles.com> website for more information about the 1 Million Turtles program, the team members who support the project, videos, training modules, some of the recorded webinars, and more.

We also have two Facebook pages; (1) [TurtleSAT](#) which provides updates on interesting sightings and community alerts such as red-eared sliders, and (2) [1 Million Turtles](#) which provides general freshwater turtle information, project updates and invitations.

1 Million Turtles Team Contacts

Remember that if you would like one-on-one support from a team member please contact 1 Million Turtles 1millionturtles@1millionturtles.com, include 'Need 1 on 1 support' in the subject heading, provide us with some information on the nature of the assistance you require along with your location and best contact details, and a local contact with be in touch with you.



NSW/ACT - Assoc. Professor Ricky Spencer, Ms. Geetha Ortac, Dr Deb Bower (Armidale area)



VIC/TAS- Assoc. Professor James Van Dyke (and NSW Riverina)



SA - Dr Sylvia Clarke, Professor Mike Thompson



WA - Dr Anthony Santoro



QLD - Ms Marilyn Connell, Assoc. Professor Deb Bower



NT - Assoc. Professor Deb Bower