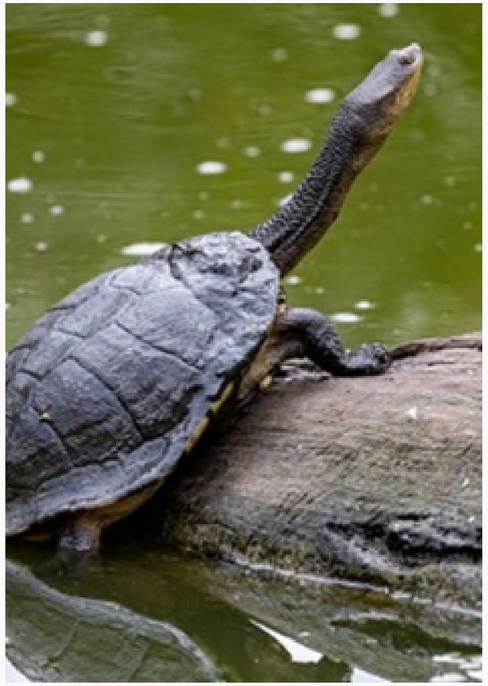

Turtle Tour Design Guide

Keen to establish a turtle tour in your local area? We have put together this turtle tour signage template for your use.

Purpose of a Turtle Tour

If you have a lake, wetland, or water body with known turtle populations, consider setting up a turtle tour to help residents connect with their local wildlife and learn more about freshwater turtles. This interactive experience can engage your community in environmental actions and create opportunities for education.

In late 2022, Dr. Ricky Spencer, one of our program leads, collaborated with the Wingecarribee Shire Council in Mittagong, NSW, to establish a turtle tour around Lake Alexandra. The initiative involved the installation of informative signage at various points around the lake. These signs provide valuable information about freshwater turtles and encourage the use of TurtleSAT to report any turtle sightings in the area. Please refer to the next slide for an example of the turtle tour and signages.

TURTLE TOUR AT LAKE ALEXANDRA NSW

4

Turtle Spotting and Safety

The lake provides important habitat for turtles. Make sure you report your sightings using TurtleSAT.

- Please remember it is illegal to catch and keep turtles. Please report illegal activity by calling 131 555.
- It is safe to pick up a turtle off the road and place it in the direction it is going. Do not return it directly to the water. Simply place it out of danger in the direction it was headed.

Scan Here
To report sightings

Lake Alexandra is the ideal location to see freshwater turtles and other aquatic wildlife. While walking around the lake you may see turtles exhibiting different behaviours. Here are a few tips for looking for turtles:

1. **Basking** – keep an eye on rocks, fallen trees and branches in the lake. Turtles can also be observed basking in shallow water.
2. **Swimming** – Small "pebbles" on the surface of the water could be a Turtle's head. Turtles need to breathe air and they will also bask in the warm surface water on a hot Spring of Summer's day.
3. **Nesting** – turtles to build a nest may travel up to 500m away from the lake. You may see them in areas around the lake or in backyards.
4. **Crossing roads** – turtles can find themselves on our roads. Be alert when driving around the lake and nearby roads.

1 Million Turtles

Wingecarribee Shire Council

3

Turtle Basking

Turtles are ectothermic, meaning they need external sources to remain warm. To do this, turtles can often be seen basking in the sunlight on rocks and logs.

Turtles bask between September and June. Best times to spot a turtle is mid-morning. However, during the warmer months of the year, they can be spotted throughout the day.

Make sure you report any turtle sightings on the TurtleSAT website or app.

Scan Here
To record turtle sightings

While walking around the lake, make sure you check exposed rocks, branches and logs. Turtles will often use them to bask.

Turtles can be easily startled. When observing them, make sure you are quiet and approach them slowly.

1 Million Turtles

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Types of Freshwater Turtles

Australia is home to 23 species of freshwater turtle. In New South Wales, 7 of these species can be found. Freshwater turtles in Australia can be divided into long-necked and short-necked turtles. Within Lake Alexandra, Eastern Long-necked Turtles and Murray Short-necked turtles can be observed. Fortunately there are no Red-eared Slider records.

Eastern Long-necked Turtle
Chelodina longicollis

Native Species: Yes
Size: 20cm
Found: throughout eastern Australia
Unique features:
- Long neck
- Pungent smell when threatened
- Black markings on underside (plastron).

Murray Short-necked Turtle
Emydura macquarii

Native Species: Yes
Size: 30cm
Found: throughout Murray-Darling Basin
Unique features:
- Short neck
- Cream patch along jawline
- Rarely seen on land except for basking on rocks and logs.

Red-eared Slider
Trachemys scripta elegans

Native Species: No. Highly invasive species and a threat to native freshwater turtles.
Size: 20cm
Found: USA and northern Mexico. Found in Australia due to released pets.
Unique features:
- Dark green shell with yellow markings
- Red or orange marking behind eye

Scan Here
To learn more about how you can help our turtles

1 Million Turtles

Wingecarribee Shire Council

1

Lake Alexandra Turtle Tour

What is the Turtle Tour?
This initiative is a self paced tour designed to provide information about turtles and how to become a citizen scientist. The initiative has been put together by the 1 Million Turtles Community Conservation Program and Wingecarribee Shire Council.

Why Turtles?
Turtles are an important species for our waterways and wetlands. They act as a vacuum to help maintain the health of a waterways. Unfortunately, turtle populations are rapidly declining due to predation and loss of habitat. By becoming a citizen scientist you can help build our understanding about turtles and their threats.

How to get involved?
Become a citizen scientist and help with research and future conservation efforts.

1. Download TurtleSAT app.
2. Register an account
3. Visit each of the Turtle Tour Stops around the lake to learn more about freshwater turtles and to records your turtle observations.

Scan Here
To download app

As you walk around the lake, keep an eye out for signs and QR codes. At each of these locations you will learn more about freshwater turtles and their behaviour. See map for Turtle Tour stops around the lake.

1 Million Turtles

Wingecarribee Shire Council

2

Turtle Nesting

Leaving the lake
Female turtles will begin to leave the lake and seek an open space to construct a nest.

Incubation
Eggs will incubate underground for 2-3 months.

Scan Here
For more information

Late Spring – Early Summer

Nest building
Female turtles will use its hind legs to dig a hole, before laying up to 20 eggs. The nest is then covered with dirt.

Autumn

Hatchlings
Hatchlings begin to emerge in early Autumn and will head towards the lake.

The island is an ideal location for nesting as it should be protected from fox predation. During late spring and early summer, keep an eye out for turtles constructing nests.

Please do not disturb turtles building nests or handle hatchlings.

1 Million Turtles

Wingecarribee Shire Council

How to get started?

To get you started, we have provided this template that you can customise in any way to suit your Local Council's branding guidelines in terms of font types, sizes, images and colours. The current template size is A3 [29.7cm X 42cm]. This ensures that you have some white space around the borders. Please feel free to modify any aspects of the template provided.

If you have any questions or require assistance, please reach to our 1 Million Turtles program team at 1millionturtles@1millionturtles.com

Options for signage material

Option 1: Corflute Signages - short-term. useful for testing

Corflute signages are cost-effective and weather hardy. Depending on the size, the minimum cost per signage may range from anywhere from $40 and above. These signages could be fastened to fences, light poles or other standing structures with plastic ties.

Options for signage material

Option 2: Metal/Stainless Steel Signages - long-term

Metal signages may require additional design work to get your signages print ready and may also cost more due to the extra materials required to erect these them at your chosen water body. However, this is a great option if you are looking at installation for long-term display.

What are the next steps?

Step 1: Take a look at the Turtle Tour signage template provided to you

We have included some text and the design layout to get your started. Please feel free to use it as is with any edits such as including the name or location of your water body (e.g., Lake Green, Evergreen Wetlands) or changing the colour scheme/images to suit your Local Council's branding guidelines/context. We have highlighted text for edits in red throughout the template to make it easier.

You may even wish to include additional signages promoting other aspects of freshwater turtle conservation or about other local wildlife.

What are the next steps?

Step 2: Identify vantage points around the lake, wetland or other water body where the turtle tour will be set up.

After identifying the vantage points or a suitable location, create a map and mark where these signages will be placed. These markers will coincide with the numbers on each signages. You may also wish to rearrange the order if needed. This map will be included on signage 1.

[Insert Name of Place] Turtle Tour

What is the Turtle Tour about?

The Turtle Tour is a self-paced initiative by the 1 Million Turtles Community Conservation Program and [your Local Council's name]. It provides information about turtles and promotes citizen science. Turtles are vital for waterways and wetlands, but their populations are declining due to predation and habitat loss. By becoming a citizen scientist, you can contribute to turtle research and conservation efforts. To get involved:

1. Download the TurtleSAT app.
2. Register an account.
3. Visit Turtle Tour Stops to learn about freshwater turtles and record your observations.

To download TurtleSAT

SCAN HERE

Apple & Android

As you walk around the [lake/wetland/river], keep an eye out for signs and QR codes. At each of these locations, you will learn more about freshwater turtles and their behaviour. See map for Turtle Tour stops around the lake.

Turtle Tour Stop 1

Insert your turtle tour map here, like the example here.

1 Million Turtles

Insert your logo here

What are the next steps?

Step 3: Edit the template to suit your needs and branding guidelines

The template has been provided to you in a 'PowerPoint' (PPT) format, size: A3 29.7cm X 42cm in landscape format and the draft was initially created in Canva. If you opt to edit the template in Canva, save your PPT template into a PDF. Upload the PDF into Canva. You will find this PDF document in your 'Projects' folder in Canva. However, please note that this conversion will result in several design distortions (e.g., text resized, overlapping, change of font type, text splitting) and this will require additional time to fix. The extent of distortion can vary.

Font Type & Size

We have used 'Canva Sans' and 'Canva Sans Medium' for font throughout the signage templates.

Main Headings

Font Type: Canva Sans Medium, Font Size: 45

Sub Headings

Font Type: Canva Sans Medium, Font Size: vary between 14, 16, 18 and 22

Paragraph

Font Type: Canva Sans, Font Size: vary between signages due to placement of text and images,

Aa

Canva Sans

Aa

Canva Sans Medium

Line Spacing

The following spacing measurements were applied to all paragraph text on the signages.

Line Spacing Options > Line Spacing: Multiple > At: 1.2

These measurements improved readability. However, please feel free to adjust as needed to suit your final design/print requirements.

Signage Colour Palette Suggestions

GREEN - USED IN TEMPLATE

#2BAF10 #99B83C #7ED957 #92D050 #CCFF66

BLUE

#004AAD #0097B2 #0CC0DF #38B6FF #DBEEF4

Signage Colour Palette Suggestions

PINK

#EDA27C

#FFA384

#F4CBC2

#FFDAC3

ORANGE

#C85103

#F9943B

#FFA500

#FFDB4F

#ECB762

Building a Turtle Tour Web Page

To complement your turtle tour, we highly encourage you to create a web page. This web page will contain additional information about freshwater turtles, the turtle tour and the 1 Million Turtles program.

To assist with this, we have created a document with sample text and outlay for this web page based on the turtle tour at Lake Alexandra at Mittagong, NSW. This is available as an attachment which you have received.

Please feel free to use as much or little text and modify it to best suit your Local Council's needs and community context.

Have a question? Contact us.

E-mail	1millionturtles@1millionturtles.com
Website	www.1millionturtles.com - via the contact form

We look forward to working with you :)