

# Turtles of the Hochelaga Archipelago

## Did you know that three species of turtles can be found on Île Bonfoin, in the Hochelaga Archipelago?

They are painted turtle, snapping turtle and map turtle. Like the five other turtle species living in Quebec, they can tolerate the temperature variations that characterize this region. As their body temperature depends on the outside temperature, they are considered an ectothermic, or cold-blooded, species.

They are often seen basking on rocks or large branches emerging from the water. By exposing themselves to heat in this way, they increase their temperature, which accelerates their digestion, growth and movement.

St. Lawrence River turtles generally lay their eggs on sandy beaches. Be careful in June if you are visiting the Hochelaga Archipelago, as you may see them digging on the shores of the islands to lay their eggs. If you do see this, it is preferable that you move away so as to not disturb them. When water levels are too high, turtles may be forced to search for egg-laying sites along roadsides, which puts them at risk. When crossing roadways, they run the risk of being hit by a vehicle.

If you spot a turtle in Quebec, we invite you to fill out a brief report form on the Carapace website at

[www.carapace.ca](http://www.carapace.ca)

This Nature Conservancy of Canada project supports the recovery efforts of Quebec's turtles.

In Quebec, all species of wild turtles are protected under the Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife, which prohibits hunting them, capturing them, keeping them in captivity or selling them.

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[www.carapace.ca](http://www.carapace.ca)  
Signalez une tortue!

### Turtle species you might see



#### Map turtle

*Graptemys geographica*

Status in Canada: special concern  
Status in Quebec: at risk

The lines on its shell resemble those on a map. Females can measure up to 27 centimetres in length and males up to 17 centimetres. A map turtle's neck and legs are streaked with yellow lines.



#### Painted turtle

*Chrysemys picta*

Status in Canada: none  
Status in Quebec: none

Its back (dorsal shell) is smooth and dark, and its breastplate (ventral shell) is yellow. It can measure up to 20 centimetres long. Its legs and tail are striped red.



#### Snapping turtle

*Chelydra serpentina serpentina*

Status in Canada: special concern  
Status in Quebec: none

Its massive shell and long dark tail, with its prominent ridges, give it a dinosaur-like appearance. The shell can measure from 20 to 49 centimetres long. It's the largest of Quebec's freshwater turtles.

**Be careful; snapping turtles bite!**

