

More snapping turtles spotted in Ottawa: residents

Last Updated: Friday, July 10, 2009 | 4:43 PM ET [Comments 17](#) [Recommend 31](#)

[CBC News](#)



Residents near the Rideau River say they've seen more snapping turtles since construction on the city's sewers began. The turtles have been lured further than usual up the riverbanks by loose soil left from the construction. (Courtesy of John Dance)

Snapping turtles in Ottawa's east end are laying their eggs closer to bike paths after work crews upgrading a sewer system left loose soil farther up the riverbank, say some Ottawa residents.

Diane Beckett, who rides her bike through Brantwood Park, near the Rideau River, said she's had a chance to spot a few of the large reptiles that are now easier to see along the banks of the river.

"They're such an amazing animal," she said. "They're right out of the dinosaur age. They've lived for so many years."



Work crews have been tearing up soil on the banks of the Rideau River to uncover the city's sewer system, but also some of the city's reptiles. (Courtesy of John Dance)

Farther along the dirt path, where the loose soil has attracted the turtles, some residents have taken steps to protect the turtles' eggs.

"This little stool is identifying there are turtle eggs under here," said Beckett, describing a plastic stepping stool with the words "turtle eggs" written in black marker between two arrows.

Snapping turtles live to be 50 or 60 years old and bury their eggs away from the water in mid-June. Most of those eggs, if not protected, end up being eaten by raccoons, skunks and crows.

John Dance, who lives nearby, said he came across four large snapping turtles near Lees Avenue one day.

"I spoke with the landscape workers who were here at the time, and they said they'd seen up to as many as 12 at a time here — which is incredible," he said.

Dance said he was compelled take out his camera to record the slow-moving creatures since they were suddenly so visible.



Someone has placed a plastic stepping stool over a spot where some of the turtle eggs have been buried. (Rebecca Zandbergen/CBC)

"I just hadn't seen anything quite like it before," he said.

Gabriel Blouin-Demers, a biology professor at the University of Ottawa, said it's not likely that there are any more turtles in Ottawa this year than usual, but the ones that are here might be easier to spot.

"They could be more visible because of the very peculiar local circumstances," he said.

"I would not jump to the conclusion that we have an overabundance of snapping turtles all of a sudden."

Dance said he has a theory about the sudden appearance of the turtles.

"Maybe they like this torn up ground of the sewer reconstruction, but it's quite remarkable — quite wonderful to see these giant reptilian creatures in the middle of the city."

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[Allniter](#) wrote: Posted 2009/07/13

at 3:55 AM ET@waxwing454: CBC had its funding cut and had to lay off several hundred employees in the last little while. I would also hazard a guess that the management and staff that remain are pretty stretched, and they are a bit under the gun with the Conservatives wanting to cut them even more. If you would like to see CBC restored to the quality it deserves as our public broadcaster, write your MP and demand the funding be restored.

It's the old saying, "You get what you pay for", and with deep funding cuts, quality suffers. CBC belongs to us. Not the Conservatives. Us. We need to come together to keep it that way, so folks, write those letters.

I like this story, btw. Snappers are cool creatures, but the poster who wrote about their aggressive tendencies and powerful jaws is quite right. They can take your finger or toe off in a split-second. They move slow but can strike lightning-fast. I once saw a film clip with a snapper sitting still with mouth agape. On its tongue it had a growth resembling a worm or larva. A fish goes for the 'worm' and it's curtains for the fish before it knows what hit it. On that film clip, you could hear that distinctive *snap*. I've never seen one, but I'd bet that if you heard that *snap*, you would never forget it--even if all your digits remained intact.

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[waxwing454](#) wrote: Posted 2009/07/12

at 9:57 PM ETNo offense to the turtles....but does the CBC not have anyone working on local news over the weekend? It's always the same old stories carried over the whole weekend.

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[smile_soccer](#) wrote: Posted 2009/07/12

at 7:32 PM ETI often see them sunning themselves on rocks, as I bike over the bridge to the new U. of O. campus.