

## QUEBEC TORTOISES: RARE AND THREATENED



Eight tortoise species, of which six are considered threatened or rare, are found in Quebec. They are threatened because they only reach reproductive age between 10 - 20 years and females lay eggs only once per year with a relatively low “hatch” rate. It is estimated that 80% of the eggs are consumed by raccoons and other natural predators.

Furthermore, hundreds of tortoises die as a result of being run over when they cross roads in search of nesting sites to lay their eggs. Their favourite spots are sand and gravel which are found on road sides. June is the nesting period so we must all be careful.

Once the eggs hatch, baby tortoises face additional threats. Because they are “cute” some are picked up as pets. Be aware that **harvesting/collecting of tortoises is PROHIBITED by law**. Also, once the tortoise grows and is no longer cute it might be released into an area not natural to it. This kind of random release could well infect the indigenous population.

Help protect our tortoises! Drive slowly and carefully and let the tortoise go on its time-less journey! If you enjoy watching tortoises and want more information, you can communicate with Jean-François Desroches and Isabelle Picard, biologists, at [tortue@ca.inter.net](mailto:tortue@ca.inter.net). Poaching of tortoises can be reported to 1-800-463-2191.