

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

INVASIVE SPECIES FACT SHEET



Common Name: Common Snapping Turtle

Family: *Chelydra*

Order: *Testudines*

Class: *Reptilia*

Species: *Chelydra serpentina*

Other names: Eastern snapping turtle, American snapping turtle, Florida snapping turtle, snapper

Origin: Eastern United States

Size: Max. carapace length 18 in. (46 cm)

Description:

- Head is black with large powerful jaws.
- Carapace (upper shell) is variable in color (green and brown to almost black) with jagged enlarged scales on top and serrated edges towards the back.
- Plastron (lower shell) is small and narrow which doesn't allow the snapping turtle to pull its body parts into its shell.
- Legs are very thick and powerful with yellowish coloration.
- Tail is yellowish and long (nearly as long as the shell). Tail is saw-toothed along the top.

Ecology:

- Found in ponds, lakes, sloughs or slow moving rivers, preferring water bodies with muddy bottoms.
- Diet is comprised of aquatic vegetation, amphibians, crayfish, worms, birds, small mammals, carrion and other turtles. Snapping turtles will eat about anything that will fit between their jaws.

Status: Prohibited in Oregon. Populations found throughout the Willamette Valley and in other areas of the state.

Interesting facts: Dried snapping turtle shells were mounted on sticks and used as rattles by Native Americans.

Impact: In Oregon, snapping turtles compete with native turtles for food, nesting and cover habitat. Snapping turtles can transmit parasites and diseases to which our native turtles are not immune.

Action: Call 1-800-INVADER to report locations of snapping turtles. If you are in possession of a snapping turtle, contact your local ODFW office. **Do not release into the wild.**



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