

# Beloved species from Canada's wetlands

## PAINTED TURTLE

*Chrysemys picta*

- + Fossils show that painted turtles existed 15 million years ago.
- + Painted turtles require access to both land and water to complete their life cycle. Eggs are laid in sandy soil. After hatching, a painted turtle's days are spent basking on rocks or logs and foraging for food in the water.
- + The painted turtle's high reproduction rate and its ability to survive in polluted wetlands and artificially made ponds have allowed it to maintain its range, though human settlement has reduced total population.
- + In British Columbia, where painted turtles are endangered, "turtle crossing season" signs have been installed to increase drivers' awareness of potential turtles on the road.
- + There are four subspecies of painted turtles, distinguished by variations in their shells.
- + Painted turtles are omnivores, and their diets vary by subspecies.
- + An adult's shell will protect it from many predators, but painted turtles will also defend themselves by kicking, scratching, biting or urinating.
- + A group of turtles is called a bale.
- + Want to see a really big turtle? Visit Tommy the Turtle, a 10,000-pound western painted turtle statue in Boissevain, Manitoba.

