

HerpMapper – Eastern Box Turtles Instructions

This project is meant to study eastern box turtle populations on TLC preserves and provide quality data to scientists studying NC's turtle population. If you find an eastern box turtle on one of our public preserves, please follow the instructions below to record your observation.

We prefer that you take visual observations and good pictures. By using the resources below, you can learn to age and sex a turtle based mostly on visual cues. If you do choose to handle the turtle, it's important to "detain" it for as little time as possible to reduce stress. Remember to wash your hands after handling; turtles carry a variety of diseases including salmonella.

Step 1: Photograph the Turtle

Similar to our fingerprints, every turtle has unique shell colors and patterns. Some turtles may also have unique identifying characteristics such as scars and irregularities of the shell. In good lighting (no harsh shadows), take several photographs of the turtle. Include the top part of its shell, its eye color, and any unique characteristics. When taking photos, try to have the turtle fill the camera frame. Make sure that you are taking clear pictures that are focused on the turtle to allow for future identification of the turtle.

You may not always be able to get a close up picture of the turtle, and that's okay. Please send us any pictures you are able to take.

Step 2: Document the Turtle

Document your turtle sighting using our [Google Form](#). You can fill this out in the field, or take notes in a journal or on your phone to input later. **All you need to submit an observation is a full body photograph, time, location, and date seen.** The more you can record, the better! See our resources below for information on how to sex turtles and determine their life stage.

Step 3: Release the Turtle

If you decided to handle the turtle while making observations, release the turtle by placing it in the location you found it, pointing in the same direction. If it was crossing a road, release it on the side of the road that it was going towards originally. If you found the turtle hiding in a leaf pile, replace the turtle where it was found.

Step 5: Send us your data

If you haven't already, submit your data on our [Google Form](#). You can submit a maximum of 10 photos up to 10 MB each.

Eastern Box Turtle Project Resources

[How to Sex an Eastern Box Turtle](#)

[Determining Eastern Box Turtle Life Stage](#)

[Box Turtle ID](#)