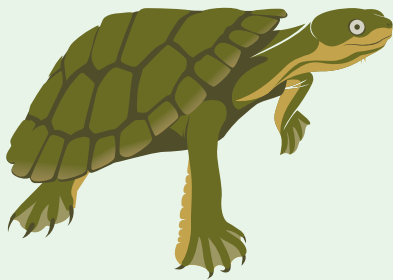


Threatened Fauna of the Hunter & Mid Coast



Manning River Turtle

{Myuchelys purvisi}

Nesting Awareness

With only one confirmed nest recorded in the wild, very little is known about the nesting behaviour of the Manning River turtle, *Myuchelys purvisi*, which is why we are calling on the community for help. Any observation of a Manning River turtle nest will be an incredibly valuable step towards understanding more about their life history, and extremely important towards the conservation of the species.

The Manning River turtle is closely related to the Bell's turtle, *Myuchelys bellii*, and it is thought their nesting behaviour might be similar. The following information on nest detection and protection is based on current knowledge informed by long-standing research as part of the Turtles Forever Program in the Northern Tablelands of NSW, Canines for Wildlife and information from 'Bell's Turtle Nest Protection Guidelines' (Streeting et al. 2021).

For more information on protecting Manning River turtle nests watch this video by using this QR code or use the link below
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL3uMzcJiWQ>



Streeting, L.M., Spark, P.D., Nesbitt, B., Nesbitt, J., Baker, L., and Dillon, M.L. (2021) Bell's Turtle Nest Protection Guidelines. Local Land Services, NSW



Manning River turtle nest being protected by Aussie Ark staff (Manning River Turtle Conservation Information and Dan Rumsey)

Where to Look

- On and near the banks of rivers and creeks, mostly within 10m of the water and up to 2.5m above normal water level
- In deposits of silt, gravel and shingle beds and bars
- Open areas with full sun where eggs can incubate
- Turtle eggs can survive some inundation and nests above average water level including low banks
- At deep waterholes, watch for turtles coming up to breathe. If a turtle exits the water do not disturb them and watch from a distance.



Manning River turtle nesting (Manning River Turtle Conservation Information and Dan Rumsey)

When to Look

- Egg-laying can occur from November to February
- Shortly after rain, and during rain in the late afternoon, rain seems to be a trigger for them to emerge from the water and begin nesting
- Turtle eggs incubate in the riverbank for up to 100 days before the hatchlings emerge and make their way into the water.

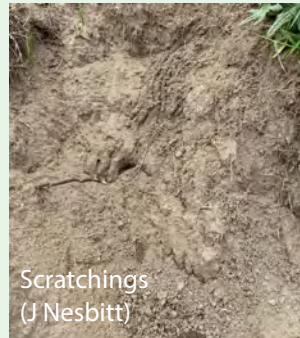
Contact

In the event that turtle hatchlings or nests are identified – either raided or intact please contact Rye Gollan Local Land Services Officer on 0468 325 125 or MidCoast Council Catchment Officer Alisha Madsen on 0436 298 486. You can also contact the Manning River Turtle Group on 0418 379 329 or download and record any turtle sightings on TurtleSAT and become a citizen scientist!

What to Look For

It is extremely difficult to find a nest intact but there are a few indicators to observe when searching:

- Test digs or small cleared depressions left in the soil
- Little holes left from hatchlings leaving the nest
- In clay soils where the turtle has packed down the top of the nest, there can be evidence of a soil 'plug' on top, as the soil has dried and cracked after the nest was laid
- On a sandy or alluvial substrate, a nesting turtle might leave a body trail, with smooth plastron (shell) tracks and marks from claws where they have exited and entered the water
- Look for an imprint left by nesting turtles – front leg claw marks and a bare flattened area are a very good indication that a female has nested.



Scratchings
(J Nesbitt)



Nest plug
(J Nesbitt)

Raided Nests

Raided nests are easier to spot than intact nests. Foxes are known to be highly effective at predating on nesting freshwater turtles and their eggs, often within 24-48 hours of a nest being laid. In these situations, there will be:

- Small broken bits of white shell and shell membrane
- Disturbed soil possibly a hole where the egg chamber has been dug open by the fox
- Often a fox scat in the hole or around the site, where the fox has marked the site to deter other foxes.

Information on raided nests is very important as it indicates active breeding and can identify potential nesting hotspots to be protected.



(B Nesbitt)