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Box Turtles

Explorer Ponce de Leon might have found the secret to longevity had he conferred with the shy box turtle.

Box turtles commonly live to be 30, though 80 to 130 years are known. Most spend their lives in a radius no bigger than a football field.

Box turtles are threatened because of illegal trafficking, road fatalities, and predators.

Many illegally transported turtles die as a result of diseases contracted from unsanitary conditions and exposure to illnesses not previously encountered.

Removing turtles from the wild is also a threat to human health. Turtles have been known to transmit salmonella.

Road fatalities are a real threat to turtles and other reptiles. If you are able to safely move a turtle off the road, place it in the direction it was heading on the roadside. Be sure you know your turtle species; a person who handles a snapping turtle risks losing fingers.

Raccoons, crows, rodents, snakes, opossums and skunks are just a few of a turtle's many natural predators. We often see turtle carapaces at the base of eagle nesting trees. The most vulnerable time in a turtle's life is after the adult female buries her eggs, when it is prime picking for the predators. Biologists estimate that of the hundreds of eggs a turtle can lay hundreds in her lifetime, only 2-3 will ever reach adulthood.

You can help perpetuate their species by paying attention when you're driving or mowing the grass.

It is illegal in New Jersey and other states to possess wildlife without a special permit.