

## Help save the Bell's turtle (*Elseya belli*)

**Conservation status in NSW:** Vulnerable

**Commonwealth status:** Vulnerable

**Saving our Species management stream:** Landscape species


**Species profile:** <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=10266>

Saving our Species aims to conserve as many threatened species as possible. Experts have identified the distribution of the Bell's turtle and the critical management actions required to conserve the species in the long-term.

All conservation work being undertaken to conserve the Bell's turtle around the state is vital to its recovery. If you are carrying out critical management actions within the species' habitat, please contact us at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspecies/contactus.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspecies/contactus.htm)

### Map of Bell's turtle distribution

**Legend**

 Species distribution



Threats to this species are outlined at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=10266#threats>

The actions listed in the action toolbox are supplementary to NSW legislation, policy and programs and can be used by stakeholders, where applicable, to guide management at a site, regional or state scale.

## Action toolbox

Action description	Scale
Survey the entire range of the Bell's turtle, starting with previously researched sub-populations, in order to establish current population density and distribution. Sub-sample using capture techniques to verify the usefulness of more cost-effective methods (e.g. basking survey) across different habitat types.	Area
Document the current health status of all Bell's turtle using rapid survey techniques to detect animals showing disease symptoms similar to those observed in George's turtle. Prepare and follow strict hygiene protocols for all work.	Area
Educate local stakeholders and recreationists who may come across dead or sick turtles on symptoms and response so as to increase sampling effort and coverage. Provide twice-yearly educational press releases in local newspapers.	Site, Area
Install signage at main access points to Bell's turtle habitat to inform fishers and other recreationists of hygiene protocols required to prevent disease transfer. Use all media opportunities available to emphasise the need for careful attention by the broader community. Use signage and media to inform fishers of the species' vulnerability and encourage safe release of captured turtles, with consideration of more degradable hooks.	Area
Determine the cost-effectiveness of locating turtle nests using sniffer-dogs and protecting them with inverted mesh cages from which hatchlings can exit. Focus on Bell's turtle nests if olfactory selectivity is feasible.	Area
If demographic models indicate that recruitment is inadequate for viability, and predation cannot be cost-effectively controlled, explore potential for gathering eggs from females or nests and raising hatchlings for safe release (as has been trialled with this and other species).	Area
Document sites where water is being drawn from turtle habitat, and work with property owners to decrease the impact of this action.	Site
Work with landholders to create interest and incentives to protect turtle habitat, primarily through fencing and the creation of non-riparian water points for livestock. Select sites where feral pig exclusion is cost-effective, and encourage landholder to enter into agreements to manage habitat appropriately (preferably in-perpetuity covenants or stewardship agreements).	Site
Identify high priority sites with turtle habitat and implement restoration and rehabilitation of locally native riverbank vegetation to improve water quality and nesting habitat.	Site
Conduct targeted research to assess the effects of flooding on habitat quality, food resources, turtle health, reproduction and survival (following similar work on George's turtle and other species).	Area

## Are you helping to save threatened species?

Tell us about the work you're doing, and find out more about our program - visit <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/savingourspecies>.