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## **Why Did the Turtle Cross the Road?**

While the age-old question is “Why did the chicken cross the road?”, the increased number of turtles seen on roads in recent months may have people wondering why turtles are crossing the road when they are typically found around ponds and creeks.

While there is no research to support the old wives' tale that seeing turtles on the road is a sign of rain, the most common reason turtles cross the road this time of year is that they are on the search for a mate, and female turtles are looking for the perfect nesting spot to lay their eggs. Turtles dig holes in loose soil to lay their eggs. After the eggs are laid, the female turtle returns to the water.

Seeing turtles on the road may raise concerns because they are not the speediest animals, making it challenging for them to move out of the way of traffic. Try to avoid running over a turtle if possible, but never swerve to miss a turtle, as your safety and the safety of other drivers are most important. While turtles may benefit from help crossing the road, it is important to remember to stop only if you can do so safely. If you can safely stop, move the turtle to the side of the road in the direction they were headed by gently picking it up by the sides of its shell. Do not put the turtle on the opposite side from where it was heading (even if it is heading in the opposite direction from the water)! Turtles have a travel plan; they will stick to it by turning around and crossing the road again if needed.

When helping turtles cross the road, be cautious of the type of turtle you are helping. Even if you can safely stop and help a turtle, do not help alligators and common snapping turtles cross the road, as these types of turtles can injure people by biting them. If you are unsure what type of turtle is on the road, it is best to err on the side of caution and not move them.

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