# Evaluation of Blanding's Head-Start Programs

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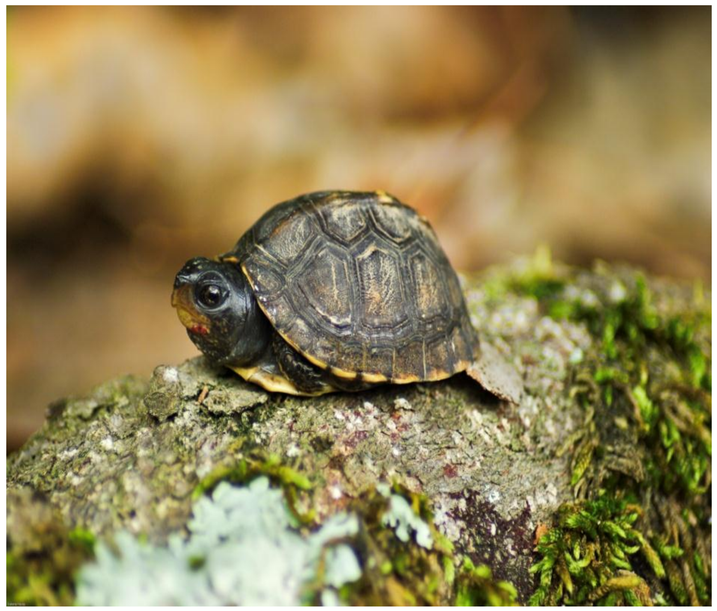
## Background and Purpose

Turtle head-start programs are conservation techniques involving collection, incubation and hatching of turtle eggs and subsequently releasing the turtles to their original or closest habitat. Many facilities especially the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre aim to increase Blanding's Turtles population viability with the head-start programs.

## Research Questions

1. What is the importance of head-start programs?
2. What factors that influence growth rates of Blanding's Turtles?
3. Are the head start programs beneficial physiologically post-release compared to the wild turtle counterpart?
4. Identify the differences between the methodology of alternative programs ? How does this affect the success rates?



## Methodology

- Literature review
- Interviews with head-start program coordinators in the United States and Canada
- Participation in KTTC head-start program
- Head-start program growth rate monitoring

## Preliminary Outcomes

- Growth rates affected by incubation temperature, nutrition, variation in methodology techniques

Head-start programs have increased:

- population viability in other species
- juvenile survivorship
- growth in captivity

## Recommendations for Future Studies

- More research on head-started Blanding's turtles population survivability is essential
- Limited data on physiological benefits of hibernation of Blanding's turtles over winter in the head-start programs

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