



# Texas Turtle Watch Sighting Report Form



Please complete one form for each location. We are interested in your information about native sliders, cooters and softshell turtles. With the exception of "Other Notes," information on this form should pertain to these target groups. **Please fill in only information that you're sure about;** even limited information is helpful. Submit your data online at [www.fortworthzoo.org/conserve/txturtlewatch.html](http://www.fortworthzoo.org/conserve/txturtlewatch.html)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Information on Basking Turtles**

Many kinds of aquatic turtles bask, meaning they move into sunlight to warm up. All three of the focus turtles groups bask near water. The three turtle groups of focus are

Trachemys (sliders)  
Pseudemys (cooters)  
Apalone (softshells)

Sliders have yellow stripes on the skin, but are most identifiable by a bright red stripe behind the eye (except in old individuals), and have hard shells. Cooters have only yellow stripes on the skin and also have hard shells. Softshells have long, tube like nose and flat, leathery shells.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_ (Specify a.m. or p.m.)  
Location of the Site: (Note: One sighting form per location.)  
County: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nearest City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nearest Major Intersection: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nearest Mile Marker: \_\_\_\_\_  
Directions to your location: \_\_\_\_\_  
GPS Coordinates: \_\_\_\_\_

**Classifying the location site:**  
The surrounding land was... (circle one): Private land / Public land  
The body of water was...(circle one): Private body of water / Public body of water  
Identify the Body of Water Habitat Type (Example: lake, pond, river, stream, wetland, swamp, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Body of Water: \_\_\_\_\_  
If following a river, identify: Closest Bridge Start \_\_\_\_\_  
Closest Bridge End \_\_\_\_\_

**Where did you see the turtle(s)?:** (Choose all that apply.)  
 Bank/Shore  Dock  Log  Rock  In water  Road  
 Upland from body of water and shore (other than dock, shore or road)

**Total number of target species turtles seen:**  
Number of turtles by shell type:  
# of hard shells \_\_\_\_\_ # of softshells \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of turtles by type:  
# of Sliders: \_\_\_\_\_  
# of Cooters: \_\_\_\_\_  
# of Softshells: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you know the species? And number of each?:**  
Species Name \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_  
Species Name \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_  
Species Name \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

(If more than three identified, attach a sheet with the additional species and number of each.)  
**Size of turtles:**  
# of turtles smaller than the palm of an adult hand \_\_\_\_\_  
# of turtles larger than the palm of an adult hand \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you see any dead turtles?** (not including road kill):  
How many? \_\_\_\_\_  
What kind? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where? \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Notes** (additional turtle species observed, human directed turtle activities, trapping, capturing etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

**Reminder:**  
Review your turtle watching tips on the Turtle Watching FAQ Sheet.

**Texas Turtle Watch**  
**Fort Worth Zoo**  
1989 Colonial Parkway  
Fort Worth, TX 76110



## Texas Turtle Watching FAQ Sheet



We thank you for your involvement in this important program. The data you collect and submit to the Texas Turtle Watch Program is valuable and will be used to help create a better understanding about the turtle populations in Texas.

### Completing the Data Form:

1. As you complete the data form, only fill out information you are sure of. If you do not know the answer to a question, leave that question entry blank.
2. Your data should focus on sliders, cooters and softshell turtles. Additional species of turtles should only be discussed in the, "Other Notes" section.
3. If possible, provide pictures of the turtles sighted.
4. Please submit your data online at [www.fortworthzoo.org/conservetxturtlewatch.html](http://www.fortworthzoo.org/conservetxturtlewatch.html)

### Turtle Watching TIPS

1. Turtles are most active in warmer weather (not extreme temperatures, such as freezing.) May through July is considered peak basking season however, Turtles may be spotted basking throughout most of the year in many parts of Texas.
2. Peak activity for most basking turtles occurs mid morning and mid afternoon.
3. You may want to bring a camera, binoculars and guide books.
4. If possible, visit a sight three times. Repeat observations provide stronger data.
5. Turtles are shy and will go into the water if approached, so remember to be quiet, still and patient.

### Quick Descriptions:

**Sliders**— Sliders are hard shell turtle, generally distinguished by a red marking present on the side of the head (red mark will be absent in some old, dark males).

**Cooters**— Cooters are hard shell turtle identified by the yellow lines on the skin. They do not have the red stripe on the head, like sliders.

**Softshells**—Softshell turtles are best recognized by the leathery, flat shells and snorkel like noses.