



# Second Stories

SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Thanks to support from you and others, this Summer, "Baby Season" took on an entirely new meaning at Second Chance Wildlife Center – and it is truly something to SHELL-EBRATE.

Many of Maryland's common turtles, like snapping turtles and box turtles, can take 10+ years to reach maturity and begin laying eggs. Each year, SCWC provides expert care to dozens of gravid (egg-bearing) female turtles suffering from a variety of injuries. Most have been struck by vehicles while seeking suitable nesting sites or were caught and chewed on by dogs. In many situations, their severe injuries cannot be treated, and we must ease their suffering. Often, the heartbreaking loss is compounded by the loss of unlaidd eggs.

**But now, at SCWC's wildlife hospital campus in Clarksburg, there is new HOPE for Maryland's turtles!**

We are thrilled to share the joyous news that unlaidd turtle eggs are now being given a second chance through the launch of our new Reptile Egg Incubation program. With your continued support for supplies, trained staff, and other critical resources, this program will be part our life-saving capabilities going forward.

The loss of any reproductive turtle is tragic. But by incubating and providing daily monitoring of the eggs, we ensure that a mother's loss is honored through the release of her hatchlings.

**As we sent this newsletter off to print, we had incubated eggs from 14 individual turtles (including a Maryland Diamondback Terrapin) and successfully hatched nearly 100 eggs!** Each of these hatchlings was released where their mother was originally found and will provide hope for a new generation of their species.

**It takes more than hope to accomplish this.** In this newsletter, we are sharing a closer look at the process of saving eggs - developed in large part by SCWC's Ian Morrison - that has already led to just under 100 hatchling turtles being released to the wild in this program's first months with others still incubating at the time of this letter's publication.

We've only just begun.

Join our shell-ebration throughout September on social media: Facebook (Facebook.com/SCWC.org) Instagram (@SecondChanceWildlifeCenter) and YouTube (Second Chance Wildlife Center – Maryland)

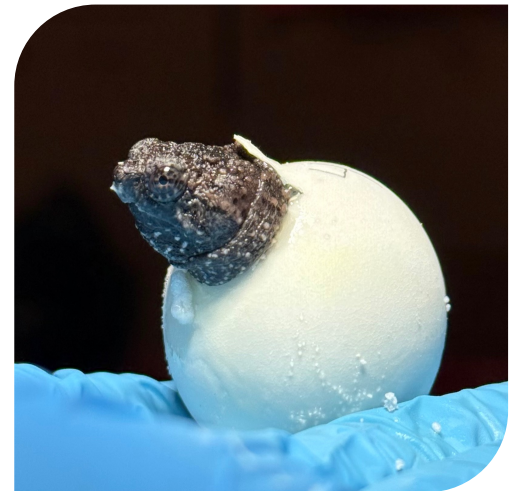
**And, join us for SCWC's FIRST-EVER Facebook Live Question and Answer Session at 12:30pm on Wednesday, September 23, 2026.**

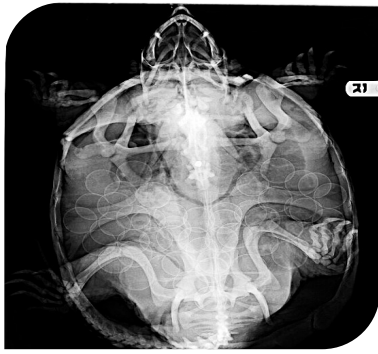
In this "Lunch & Learn" session, key members of our animal care team will answer questions about our work with turtles and our new turtle egg incubation program "live-streamed" on Facebook (we will record this for those who can't join us live).



Hope

SECOND CHANCE WILDLIFE CENTER  
TURTLE EGG INCUBATION



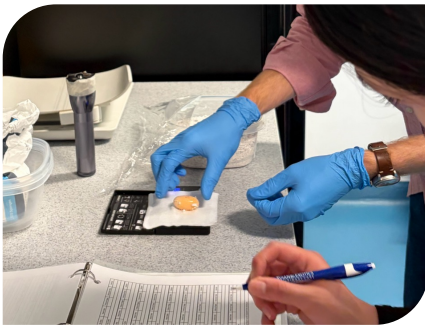


## Key Steps in SCWC's New Turtle Egg Incubation Program



1. X-Ray Process: Every turtle that arrives at SCWC receives an x-ray during their intake exam. These help us diagnose injuries, but they also help us quickly determine if a female turtle is gravid (egg-bearing) like the snapping turtle shown here with 50 eggs.

2. Prepping Eggs: After eggs have been laid or surgically extracted, they must immediately be cleaned, weighed, catalogued, and carefully placed into our incubators. This process requires caution and attention to detail, which can determine whether the eggs develop properly.



3. Monitoring each egg: The eggs and incubators are checked daily to ensure they are kept in consistent temperature & humidity conditions. After 45 days of incubation, the eggs are carefully weighed again. Turtle eggs gain weight when developing properly, so we can use this 45-day weight to predict hatch rates.



4. Pipping: After months of care and development, eggs begin to pip! This is when they first break through the egg but haven't fully hatched out yet. Hatching may take 1-2 days after they pip. Did you know that turtles hatch out with an "egg tooth" that helps them break through their shell? The small "tooth" made of keratin falls off shortly after they hatch.



5. Hatchling care: Many turtles hatch out with some of their yolk sac still unabsorbed. These turtles stay in our incubators until they fully absorb the nutrients from their yolk sac, and their umbilicus (like a turtle umbilical cord) fully heals. The SCWC team provides daily wound care to ensure the sensitive yolk sac and umbilicus do not become infected.



6. Release hatchlings: Once the turtle's umbilicus is healed, they are moved out of our incubators and briefly into care. If healthy and expressing normal behaviors, they are quickly cleared for release back to where their mother was originally found! Turtles hatch out fully equipped with the instincts needed for survival.

**Help us continue to provide hope for turtles: [WWW.SCWC.ORG/DONATE](http://WWW.SCWC.ORG/DONATE)**  
**Or, avoid credit card fees charged by third party service providers and mail a check to:**  
**Second Chance Wildlife Center 26400 Haines Rd, Clarksburg, MD 20871**