

Dear Peter and the House of Representatives and Natural Resource Finance and Policy Committee,

We are in favor of banning ALL turtle harvesting in the state of Minnesota.

My 11yr old daughter Ella K and I have been in contact with the Minnesota DNR several times after my daughter had found a baby painted turtle swimming in our shoreline. We live on Stingy Lake north of Nashwauk. We have owned our property since 1994 and have seen a steep decline of birds, frogs and have barely seen a turtle within the last 5 years.

In my research and questions I have had no answer to any turtle counts recorded from the DNR to support any turtle harvesting of any manner or proportion. I have submitted some of my recorded emails to Peter Strohmeier of my contacts with Krista Larson and Sean Sisler with neither of them having any evidence that our Minnesota lakes could withstand such a practice. There does not seem to be enough data to support if our turtle population could sustain any commercial or the numerous angling licenses allowing for harvesting for personal use of any kind.

Our turtles could be already endangered. Nobody has made any effort protecting them before it could be too late and they all become extinct. It seems this detail has been overlooked and underfunded to report any data.

We have supported Change.org banning harvesting of MN turtles. My daughter and I gathered over 300 signatures for the cause.

I have also sent that information to Peter along with my daughter's letter to help save our turtles in her efforts of supporting the ban.

Below is my original email to the Minnesota DNR in raising awareness of our concerns for saving our precious turtles from becoming extinct.

Thank you for your time and consideration of preserving our wildlife for our present and future generations sincere there is no backing evidence that our turtle population is in safe standing numbers to support any turtle harvesting.

Please place a ban and put a stop to all MN turtle harvesting until the data is completed before it's too late.

Thank you for hearing our voices.
Sincerely, Shenda and Ella K

Dear Krista-

We have been besides ourselves in shock of the petition I had found while looking up information on what our baby painted turtle would be doing in preparation that we had found and rereleased getting ready for his hibernation in our lake.

How could the DNR even entertain the very thought of allowing ANY turtle harvesting with such shortages we have already seen over the years.

We have lived on Stingy Lake north of Nashwauk since 1994 and have seen a steep decline in birds, frogs and turtles over the past several years. I have voiced my concern already about birds to no avail. We care for all and any wildlife that is in our vicinity and will do all we can to love and protect them.

How could the DNR whom we trust to take consideration in protecting our wildlife ever think it would be a safe practice uprooting our native turtles that we are instructed to making sure any turtles found to be picked up and brought to safety that may be in harms way because of the shortages to only then be harvested to be sold to Asia to be eaten, possibly be used to make some virus superbug like Covid knowing they carry salmonella, sold as a pet, or only to be used for their beautiful shells.

Has anyone done a study to see how sustainable our turtle population is in each lake in Minnesota?

Turtles have been known to go crazy when removed from their natural environment and die just from the anxiety. How could the DNR and the State of Minnesota think this is good for our environment disturbing the ecological impact this could potentially have on all of our beautiful Land of 10,000 Lakes we are blessed to live in. This could impact pollution and the food chain affecting our birds, wildlife, and then ultimately us humans in the end.

I would hope the DNR would lean to put an immediate ban on ALL cruel harvesting practices.

Harvesting is NOT best for our turtles or our environment.

My daughter and I can attest that even our temporary loving friendship with our painted bundle of joy turtle the size of a quarter named Baby T was a smart, docile, friendly, loving, sensitive, appreciative little guy who definitely had feelings. He was not just a turtle. ALL living creatures have feelings and emotions.

If it is all about money, I would like to ask how much our lake would cost to pay to protect our Baby T and all other turtles from this unthinkable practice. Protecting our lake is priceless to us.

My 11yrs old daughter, Ella K and I have been doing all we can to raise awareness of this cruel harvesting of our endangered native turtles with sending emails, passing on the word to sign the petition started at [Change.org](https://www.change.org) we had found online.

Life in general has been most difficult with my daughter's compromised immune system with severe food allergies, losing most of our family members whom have all passed away, with the very threat of Covid

changing life as we all have known it, our country divided, our nature friends have become our only sanity becoming our sanctuary away from a world living in unrest and panic during a pandemic.

We will do ANYTHING to try to protect and save our natural resources and wildlife to preserve for our present life my Ella's growing up thru her lifetime and the future generations to come.

Please consider banning ALL turtle harvesting in our beautiful State of Minnesota lakes, ponds, streams and rivers before it's too late before the very threat of extinction takes place causing grave results that cannot be reversed or overturned.

Thank you for your time, serious thought and consideration in this very dire matter.

Sincerely, Shenda and Ella K Skalski

P.S. Below is the email my daughter had written and sent to friends to help our beloved Baby T and all turtles in our state.

This is a picture of me and my turtle Baby T.

I found him swimming along the shore in our beach.

We knew we had to release him back into the same spot we had found him.

We thought it was safer and then after we let him go Mama was looking up stuff about him going into hibernation and she saw a petition about people in Minnesota trapping turtles and sending them to Asia. I love him so much and want to do everything I can to keep him safe and protected. Can you please help me try to save him and all sweet turtles in Minnesota?

Could you please sign this the site is [change.org](https://www.change.org) and the article is called: unsustainable turtle harvest in Minnesota.

Could you also pass the site on?

Do you know anyone who could help with this?

Thank you, Ella K

Sent from my iPad



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