



9 March 2016

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06103

**Re: *Support for* AN ACT CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF THE HABITUATION OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ANIMALS, THE POSTING OF INFORMATIONAL NOTICES CONCERNING ENCOUNTERS WITH WILDLIFE AND THE STATUS OF SNAPPING TURTLES UNDER STATE LAW**

To whom it may concern,

City residents occasionally report seeing snapping turtles within Hartford city limits. Evidently turtles have survived within our parks and urban wild open spaces. During the past ten years open spaces along the North and South Branches of the Park River have been developed for new schools. There is great concern that disrupted turtle habitat will result in the slow decline of the turtle population.

*Snapping Turtles are long-lived creatures that reach reproductive maturity late in life, particularly in northern populations, and have low reproductive and survival rates. It is especially harmful to remove mature females from the population. It may be 10 to 20 years before a female makes a nest and lays eggs for the first time, and she may continue for 30 or more years. A particular study in Ontario shows that, once a population of Snapping Turtles is reduced by hunting or by a spike in predation, that population may never recover due to the long reproductive cycle and the dangers of laying eggs far from the water, often along roads.*

City residents are always excited to see wildlife. As we work to improve the North Branch of the Park River, wildlife such as snapping turtles are an important incentive that can motivate public interest needed to shift political will towards the restoration of park ponds and riparian corridors.

For this, and many other reasons, we believe snapping turtles ought not be hunted for commercial gain, ought to be listed as a threatened species – and so support the proposed amendment to **reduce the daily and season bag limits for the taking of snapping turtles;** as an important step towards conservation of the species.

Sincerely,

Mary Rickel Pelletier  
Founding Director of Park Watershed