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Oblong spotters needed

by BRENDAN FOSTER

ANIMAL lovers are being asked to record any sightings of the Oblong turtle in the wild.

Murdoch University PhD candidate Caitlin Bartholomaeus says little is known about the slow-moving animal and she's keen to discover how urban sprawl and climate change are affecting its numbers.

"Turtles need to leave

• Caitlin Bartholomaeus with a turtle

wetlands as part of their life cycle and as such, increasing urbanisation could be a greater threat to turtle survival [than predation]," she says.

"Members of the public can help us to increase monitoring levels by logging their sightings of turtles anytime, anywhere and in any condition.

"We will use this data to get a better picture of where turtles are, when they are moving and what they are doing."

Sightings can be logged with the Turtle Watch hotline.

ClimateWatch website and Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre.

"These turtles are the top predators underwater and their loss could be catastrophic for our local wetlands," Ms Bartholomaeus says.

"This is why it is vitally important we try to understand how to help them adapt to the changes in the environment."

Oblong turtles grow to up to 40cm and have very long necks that can be almost as long as their shells.