

Blanding's Turtle

Emydoidea blandingii

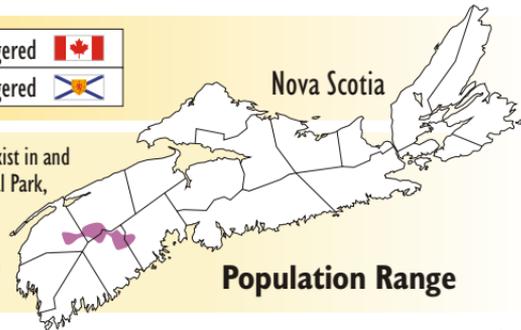
STATUS

Endangered 

Endangered 

33

Nova Scotia



Population Range

An estimated 350 adults exist in and around Kejimikujik National Park, McGowan Lake, Pleasant River and the Toboatic. Sightings reported through southwest Nova Scotia.



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Habitat

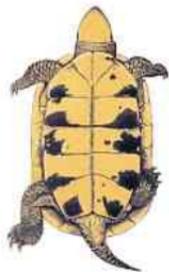
Found in freshwater wetlands (still-water streams, marshes, swamps, bogs, and coves). Occurs in dark, slow-moving waters, with muddy bottoms and dense aquatic vegetation, including sedge, sphagnum, sweetgale, cow-lily, and pickerel weed. They need exposed, gravelly or sandy areas for nesting in June, and permanent wet areas for overwintering.

Species Description

The Blanding's turtle has a high-domed, helmet shaped and sized shell that is dark grey (dry) to black with yellowish flecks (wet). It has a long neck and bright yellow chin and throat. Hatchlings are dark grey with a pale yellow throat, and toonie-sized. Full-grown adults are about 20-25 cm in length.



carapace (back):
dark grey;
yellowish flecks



plastron (belly):
yellowish; big
black blotches



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South facing nesting beach



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Summer wetland habitat

Blanding's Turtles are found basking in the sun around wetlands in early April & May; along roadsides in June & July (when females are up laying eggs) and August & September (when travelling to overwintering sites); swimming in freshwater wetlands throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

Interesting Points

- Hatchlings can walk over 100 m per day and may be able to survive freezing.
- Juveniles do not mature until their mid 20s, and individuals are believed to live longer than 80 years!
- They absorb oxygen through their skin in winter, and can survive over three months underwater!
- Females often return to nest in same place each year.

Similar Species

Painted Turtle:

Smaller (10-15 cm); low-domed shell; red-orange markings on shell and face; all yellow/orange plastron; white outline around each shell segment.



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Wood Turtle:

Similar size (16-21 cm long); sculpted, bumpy shell; orange colouration around armpits and underside of shell and throat.



© NS DNR

Snapping Turtle:

Much larger (up to 60 cm long); sculpted, bumpy shell, jagged at the back; spiky tail, and huge head; brown-grey colour.



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Threats to Survival

- Habitat loss and degradation threatens all life stages.
- Predators (raccoons, small mammals, birds) eat eggs, hatchlings and young juveniles.
- Road mortality (being run over by vehicles)
- Collection for the pet trade



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How You Can Help

Learn how to recognize Blanding's turtles and report sightings. If you see turtles, observe and appreciate but do not disturb them. Drive carefully and keep your eyes open for turtles on the road, especially in June. Respect them and their habitat!



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Protecting a nest

Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

Contact: Parks Canada (Kejimikujik National Park & National Historic Site) (902) 682-2770

Info: www.speciestatrisk.ca or www.speciestatrisk.gc.ca

Sighting Reports: 1-866-727-3447 or sightings@speciestatrisk.ca

Stewardship: Kejimikujik Area Stewardship Program, www.speciestatrisk.ca/stewardship