

Bog Turtles

Glyptemys muhlenbergii

Characteristics

- 3-4.5 inches long
- Yellow-orange spot on sides of neck
- Dark brown-black shell

Threats

- Wetland loss
- Roadway mortality
- Predators
- Poaching

Status

- Imperiled

About the Bog Turtle

Bog turtles are the smallest turtles in the USA. They are only found in eastern states with two distinct populations: northern and southern. These little turtles are secretive, often living deep in tunnels in mud, making them hard to find. Bog turtles are omnivorous and eat a variety of foods like worms, berries, and small salamanders. They have a surprising life span, with the oldest recorded individual living 61 years. Males have longer, thicker tails compared to females. Females typically lay 3-4 eggs each summer in elevated areas.

Native Habitat: Mountain Bog

Bog turtles live in specific habitats – fens and bogs – which makes protecting these habitats important. Mountain bogs are isolated wetlands with acidic, wet soil, deep mud layers, thick mosses, high humidity, and open sunny spaces. During winter, bog turtles move into deeper areas of the bogs to brumate (reptile version of hibernation). Unfortunately, fewer than 10% of mountain bogs remain today due mostly to wetland drainage from agriculture and roadside ditching.

How Can You Help?

Please contact biologists at your state wildlife management agency if you think you have seen a bog turtle, own a wetland that you think may have bog turtles, or are interested in restoring or protecting a wetland on your property. Supporting groups that protect bog turtles is another way to help!

What Other Species Will Benefit?


Monarch Butterfly


Woodcock


Golden-winged Warbler


Bog Lemming


Red Salamander


Gray's Lily

Find out more
ARCProtects.org/bogturtles

ARC Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy

Defenders of Wildlife



Information for Land Owners

Thank you for helping bog turtles!

By supporting this mission, you are helping not only the southern population of bog turtles but other species that live on your land.

Programs to Help You Help the Turtles

Partners For Fish and Wildlife (PFW)
This US Fish & Wildlife program provides technical and financial support for landowners who want to improve habitats for wildlife.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
This Natural Resources Conservation Service program offers technical and financial support for farmers who want to improve wetlands, wetland buffers, and agricultural operations. Cost share is available to install watering systems for cattle, fencing, wetland restoration and other practices.

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)
This Natural Resources Conservation Service program helps farmers protect, restore, and enhance wetlands. It also offers tax benefits to farmers for acreage enrolled in the program.

Wildlife Conservation LandsProgram (WCLP)
This NC Wildlife Resources Commission program offers major tax benefits to landowners who manage habitat for threatened and endangered species (minimum acreage for enrollment is 20).

Frequently Asked Questions

Bog turtles are on federal/state threatened and endangered species lists. Can the government take my land if I have bog turtles on my property?
No. Neither the state nor federal government will take your land or dictate what you can do with your land.

Can farming and bog turtles get along?
Yes! Grazing from cattle, horses, and other farm animals can help provide the habitat bog turtles need by keeping the wetland open and sunny.

I am interested in bog turtles and mountain bogs, and want to know if I have them on my property. Is there someone I can talk to?
Yes! The Working Lands for Wildlife program has a biologist in your area who will be happy to chat about this. There is no commitment to have this discussion.

Websites

Explore these websites for more information about bog turtles, landowner support, and how you can further help this imperiled species!

PFW
fws.gov/program/partners-fish-and-wildlife

EQIP
nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-environmental-quality-incentives

WRE
nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/wre-wetland-reserve-easements

WCLP
ncwildlife.org/Conserving/Programs/Land-Conservation-Program

Got Bog Turtles?

Who to contact about the southern population

John Kleopfer
VA Dept of Wildlife Resources
Herpetologist
john.kleopfer@dwr.virginia.gov

Gabrielle Graeter
NC Wildlife Resource Commission Herpetologist
gabrielle.graeter@ncwildlife.org

Sue Cameron
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
susan_cameron@fws.gov

Find out more

ARCProtects.org/bogturtles

ARC Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy

Defenders of Wildlife