

Hatchling Turtles of Massachusetts



Each spring female turtles must find a suitable location to dig a nest and lay eggs. The turtle lays the eggs and leaves them to develop and hatch on their own. During the weeks of incubation, many eggs are dug up and eaten by predators or succumb to disease. Surviving eggs hatch in late summer with most hatchlings emerging from the nest in August and September.

Painted Turtle

Chrysemys picta



Eggs are laid in May or June. Eggs hatch in August or September. Hatchlings may then emerge from their nest chamber or they may remain there over winter to emerge the following spring. Typical clutch size is 5 to 8 eggs. Carapace length is 2.5 to 3 cm. Weight is 3.5 to 5 grams. Hatchlings resemble adults in coloration. Found throughout Massachusetts.

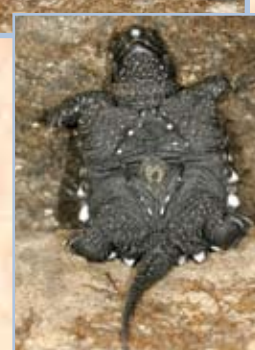


Snapping Turtle

Chelydra serpentina



Eggs are laid in May or June. Hatchlings emerge in August to October. Typical clutch size is 20 to 50 eggs. Carapace length is about 3 cm. Weight is about 7.5 to 9 grams. Hatchlings resemble adults in appearance but lack the jagged tail. Tail is very long. Found throughout Massachusetts.



Musk Turtle

Sternotherus odoratus

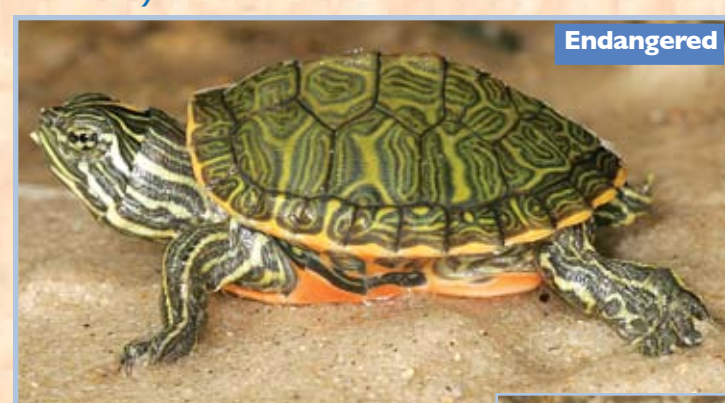


Eggs are laid in May to July. Hatchlings emerge in August or September. Typical clutch size is from 2 to 5 eggs. Carapace length is about 2.2 cm. Weight is about 2.4 grams. Hatchlings have a black, rough carapace and two light stripes on each side of the head. The edges of the marginal scutes are white. Found throughout Massachusetts.



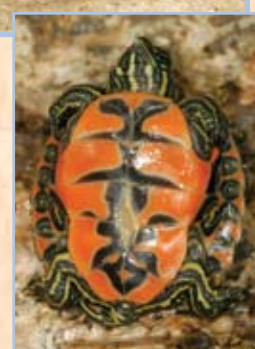
N. Red-bellied Cooter

Pseudemys rubriventris



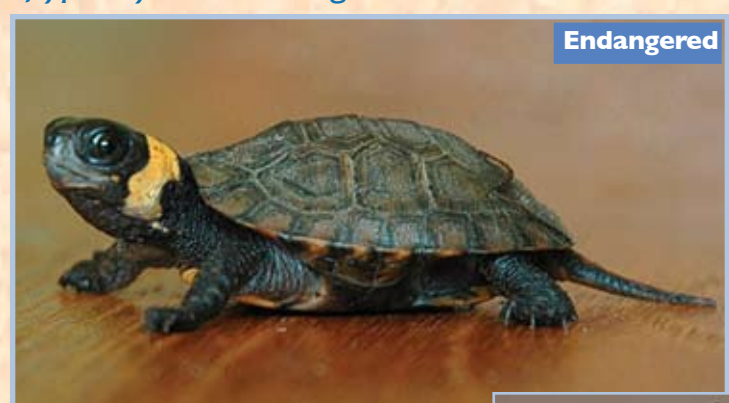
Endangered

Eggs are laid in June and July. Hatchlings emerge August to October. Typical clutch size is from 10 to 20 eggs. Carapace length is about 3.3 cm. Weight is about 9.8 grams. Carapace has green swirled patterns. Edges of marginal scutes are orange and plastron is red with dark markings. Head has yellow stripes. Restricted to Plymouth County, Massachusetts.



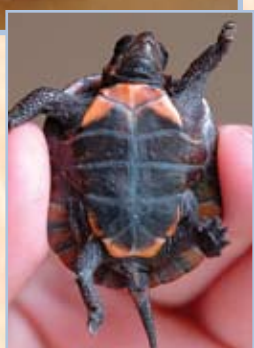
Bog Turtle

Glyptemys muhlenbergii



Endangered

Eggs are laid in late May and throughout June. Hatchlings emerge August to September. Typical clutch size is 2 to 5 eggs. Carapace length is about 2.5 cm. Weight is about 4 grams. Restricted to southwestern Massachusetts.



Spotted Turtle

Clemmys guttata

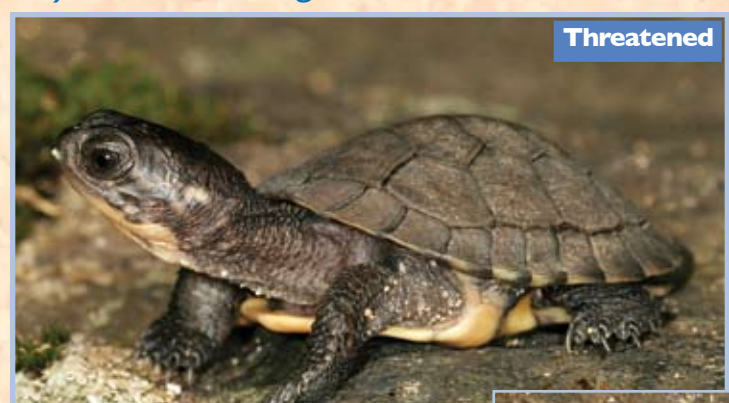


Eggs are laid in May or June. Hatchlings emerge in August to October from a very shallow nest often about 2.5 cm below the ground. Typical clutch size is 3 to 5 eggs. Carapace length is 2.5 cm. Weight is about 3.5 to 5 grams. Hatchlings resemble adults in coloration. Found throughout Massachusetts.



Blanding's Turtle

Emydoidea blandingii



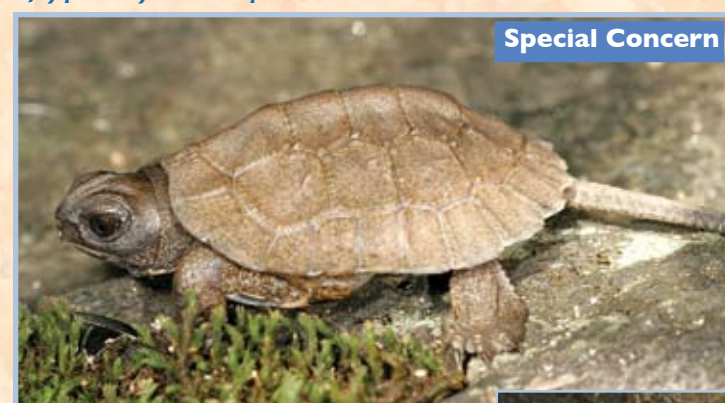
Threatened

Eggs are laid in June or July. Hatchlings emerge in late August to October. Typical clutch size is 10 to 12 eggs. Carapace length is 3.5 cm. Weight is about 10 grams. Hatchlings lack the yellow flecking of the adults on their carapace. Found primarily in eastern Massachusetts (except Cape Cod.)



Wood Turtle

Glyptemys insulpta



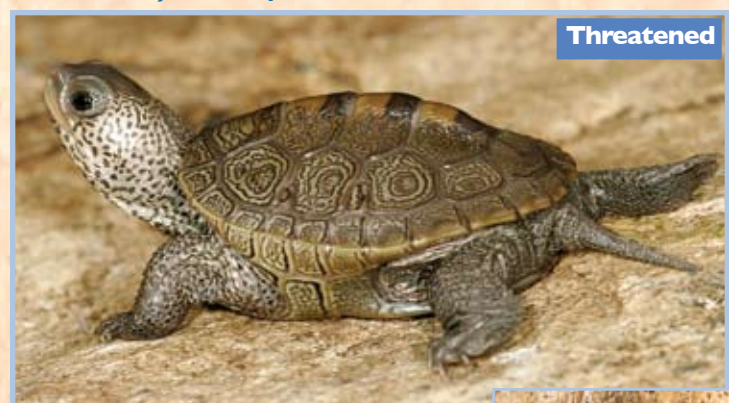
Special Concern

Eggs are laid from late May to early July. Hatchlings emerge in August or September. Typical clutch size is 7 to 8 eggs. Carapace length is about 3 cm. Weight is about 6 grams. Hatchlings lack flecking and sculpting that is prevalent on adults. Found throughout Massachusetts except Cape Cod and the Islands.



Diamondback Terrapin

Malaclemys terrapin



Threatened

First clutch of eggs is laid in early June with a second clutch laid in July. Typical clutch size is 12 eggs. Hatchlings emerge August to October. Carapace length is about 2.6 cm. Weight is 5 to 6 grams. Hatchlings resemble adults. Restricted to coastal areas in southeastern Massachusetts.



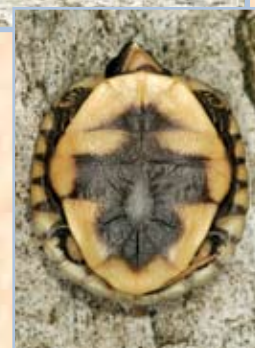
Eastern Box Turtle

Terrapene carolina



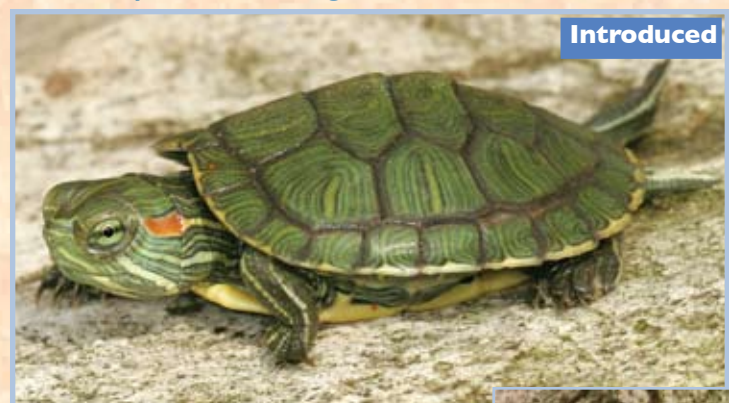
Special Concern

Eggs are laid in late May or June. Hatchlings emerge August to October. Typical clutch size is 6 eggs. Carapace length is 3 cm. Weight is 4 to 5 grams. Hatchlings are brown with a yellow spot on each scute. Found in eastern and central Massachusetts and the Connecticut River Valley.



Red-eared Slider

Trachemys scripta elegans



Introduced

Red-eared slider nests are found in Massachusetts but nest data is limited. In their native range, nesting usually occurs in the spring or early summer with hatchlings emerging in 60 to 80 days. Sliders can lay multiple clutches. Clutch size ranges from 2 to 23 eggs. Carapace length is 2.5 to 3.5 cm.



Hatchling turtles have a difficult first few years of life. The journey from nest to water subjects them to predation, dehydration and even road traffic. Once in the water, they still risk predation from birds, snakes, fish and frogs. Terrestrial hatchlings, such as the box turtle, are always at risk from larger animals. The majority of hatchlings do not survive their first year. Hatchlings that do develop into adults risk little natural predation and can live long lives. Human activities (road traffic, habitat degradation, collection for pets) remain as the greatest threats to our native turtle species.

Notes: "Carapace" is the upper shell, "plastron" is the lower shell, and turtle size is measured from the front to the rear of the carapace. Most of the turtles on this poster have the "egg tooth" on their beak. They lose it a few weeks after hatching. Weight of a U.S. quarter is 5.4 to 5.8 grams and the diameter is 2.4 cm.

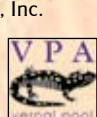
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Electronic Field Guide
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