

Washington State Species and Communities of Special Concern

information for family forest owners

As a good land steward, it is important to be aware of plant and animal species of special concern that may occur on your lands, and how forest management activities may affect these species. The Washington State Implementation Committee (WA SIC) for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is pleased to provide a series of factsheets on species of special concern that may occur on forested lands within Washington State. Each species factsheet includes a description of the species, habitat, range, and information on known threats to populations in Washington.



Photo of Western Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*)
by Chris Brown www.nps.gov

Species: Western Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*)

Group: Reptile

Natural Heritage Rank: G3G4, S1

Legal Status: State Endangered

General Description

This species is a medium-sized pond turtle. Adults grow to roughly 8 inches long (shell length). The shell is smooth and dark brown or olive on top, sometimes with fine streaking. The head is also dark and does not have the bright yellow or red coloring of some other turtle species. Females lay eggs in spring, usually within 100 feet of water. This species eats aquatic animals such as insects, crayfish, amphibians, and vegetation such as algae and cattail roots.

Habitat

This species lives in wetlands, ponds, lakes and slow-moving parts of streams and rivers. Pond turtles need basking sites such as floating logs, emergent rocks and pieces of wood, and mats of vegetation.

Range in Washington

Current populations occur in several places along the Columbia Gorge.

Threats

The primary threat to this species has been conversion of wetland habitat to agriculture and development, especially in the Puget Trough region. Populations are now very small and isolated, and are at risk from site-specific threats such as disease and predation.



Map source is Washington GAP Analysis with following reference:
Cassidy, K. C. 1997. *Washington Gap Project Reptile and Amphibian Distribution Models, Version 5*. Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Washington Seattle, WA. Downloaded September 5, 2006

The information provided in this sheet has been compiled by the Washington SFI Implementation Committee. This species is one example of many that depend on family forest owners in Washington State for protection. To view other accounts, visit www.wdfw.wa.org or www.dnr.wa.gov/nhp, or www.natureserve.org.

