

Bog Turtle

Bog Turtle - *State Endangered Species* - Pl.3 (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*)

Identification: 3" - 4 1/2". A large orange or yellow patch on each side of the head is a key identifying mark of the Bog Turtle. The carapace varies from light brown to black, with each scute on the carapace showing a pattern of concentric circles; large scutes may have a light center. The moderately domed carapace may be rough or smooth, and is weakly keeled along the midline. The hingeless plastron is dark brown to black; may have some yellow in the middle. The limbs are typically brown, but may be flecked with orange.

Where to find them: The Bog Turtle is among the most difficult to find because of its elusive behavior and rarity as a result of habitat destruction. It prefers marshes, wet meadows, and fens featuring plant species such as sedges, rushes, mosses, skunk cabbage, cattail, jewelweed, and smartweed.

When to find them: Mid-April through June as it basks in the sun on sedge tussocks and matted vegetation litter.

Range: Entire state. The greatest numbers occur in the agricultural landscapes of northwestern and southwestern New Jersey.

Conservation Status: Habitat loss, pollution, and illegal collecting have negatively impacted bog turtle numbers in New Jersey. In addition to protecting sites currently occupied by this species, management of suitable bog turtle habitat is important. Such management includes suppression of vegetative succession and controlling undesirable (often exotic) plant species.

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(*Clemmys muhlenbergii*)
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Key Features

- **Orange/yellow patch on head.**
- **Carapace: light brown to black.**
- **Plastron: hingeless; dark brown to black.**



State Endangered



New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife ~ 2003



Excerpt from: Schwartz, V. & D. Golden, "Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of New Jersey". New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife 2002.

Order the complete guide at - <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/products.htm>