

Eastern Painted Turtle

Eastern Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta picta*) - Pl.6

Identification: 4" - 9 7/8". The Eastern Painted Turtle is the only turtle in which the large scutes are lined up in even rows across the carapace. The plain, dark scutes of the smooth, unkeeled carapace have yellow, olive or red borders. There may be a faint thin line down the middle of the back. The edge of the carapace often has red or orange marks. The hingeless plastron is plain yellow but often stained red by algae. The head typically has two bright yellow spots or streaks pointing back from the eye, as well as a bright yellow line on the jaw. The upper jaw has a notch. The neck, legs, and tail have red, orange or yellow markings.

Where to find them: Any standing body of water.

When to find them: Active April through September.

Range: Entire state.

Note: The very similar Midland Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta marginata*) may also occur in our area. This subspecies has alternating scutes across the back of the carapace, and the scutes lack the light borders. There is a dark blotch on the plastron. The coloring and pattern otherwise resemble the Eastern Painted Turtle. A good photo will be necessary to confirm this observation.

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Key Features

- Carapace: smooth & unkeeled with dark scutes bordered in yellow or olive.
- Scutes align along carapace, forming almost straight lines.
- Plastron: hingeless & plain yellow, but occasionally stained red (compare to redbelly above).



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>