

## Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*)

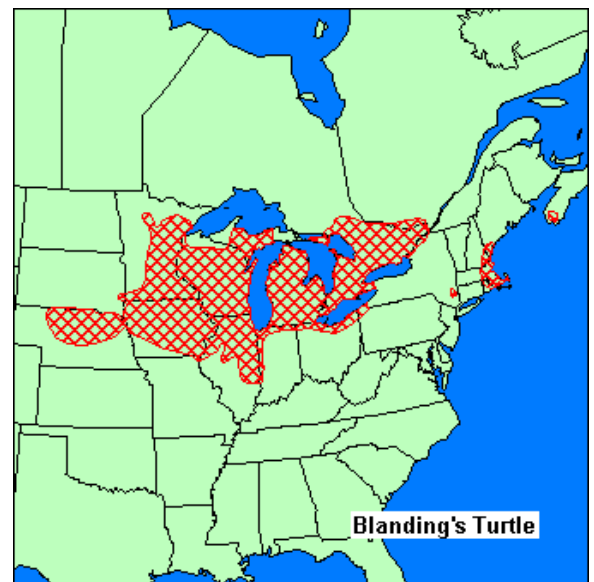
### General information:

The Blanding's turtle is a semi-aquatic turtle seen only occasionally on dry land. Considered to be an endangered species in much of its range, it is certainly rare and local in Massachusetts. It is a medium size turtle with the adult's carapace (upper shell) length between 7 and 9 inches long. The upper shell, dome-shaped but flattened along the midline, is covered with many yellow or light colored streaks on a dark shell. When you can find them at all, this makes them very noticeable due to the contrasting colors. The plastron (lower shell) has the opposite coloring - a yellow base with black blotches covering it. A distinct feature that confirms identification of a Blanding's turtle is its yellow throat and chin. The head and legs are dark and have yellow spots covering them. Its nickname is the "semi-box turtle," because of its domed appearance. Although the lower shell is hinged it does not shut as tightly as the box turtle.



### Where is it found?

The Blanding's turtle's range is centered in the north-central United States, with smaller, isolated populations in New York and New England.



### Habitat:

The most common place you will find a Blanding's turtle is in wetland areas that have clean shallow water. This includes ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs and ditches with water in them. It even likes to sun bathe and sit on logs on the edge of a lake. The younger ones sit on sedge and alder hummocks. It is also known to stray far away from the water, especially when they are nesting. In rare occasions, they are known to use residential property along with farms and gardens, if their needs are met.

## **Nesting and reproduction:**

These turtles usually nest in open, grassy land. They will even do this far from water if the conditions are right and there are no sign of predators. Most often, they will nest on undeveloped lands that haven't been disturbed/alterd in any way. In order to reproduce, the Blanding's turtle needs to survive between 14 and 20 years to reach maturity. Once they do, mating occurs in April and May and nesting occurs in June. The number of eggs laid ranges from 5 to 12 with an average of 8.

## **Fun Facts:**

- It has twice failed to become the state reptile of Minnesota
- Lives about 60 years
- Eggs are 1.5 inches long and elliptical in shape

## **Contact us:**

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## **Diet:**

The Blanding's turtle is omnivorous and eats crustaceans, insects and other invertebrates, as well as carrion, fruits, berries and other vegetable foods.

## **Protection:**

Throughout much of its range, the species is considered endangered. The main causes for this are loss of wetland through drainage or flooding, loss of upland habitat due to development, human disturbance and collection, and increase in nest predation, mainly by skunks and raccoons.

States where they are endangered (Indiana, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri [Massachusetts](#), Nebraska, South Dakota, Great Lakes region and Canada) are trying to conserve as much land as possible for the turtles to live and breed.

Because of the long time to maturity and the small number of eggs, the loss of adult Blanding's turtles from the breeding population is very damaging to its long-term prospects for survival.

If you see a Blanding's turtle, note its location and take a picture if you can. Enjoy what is likely a once-in-a-lifetime experience but, please, let them go about their business and do not remove turtles from the wild.