



Species at Risk Profile Series: Western Painted Turtle

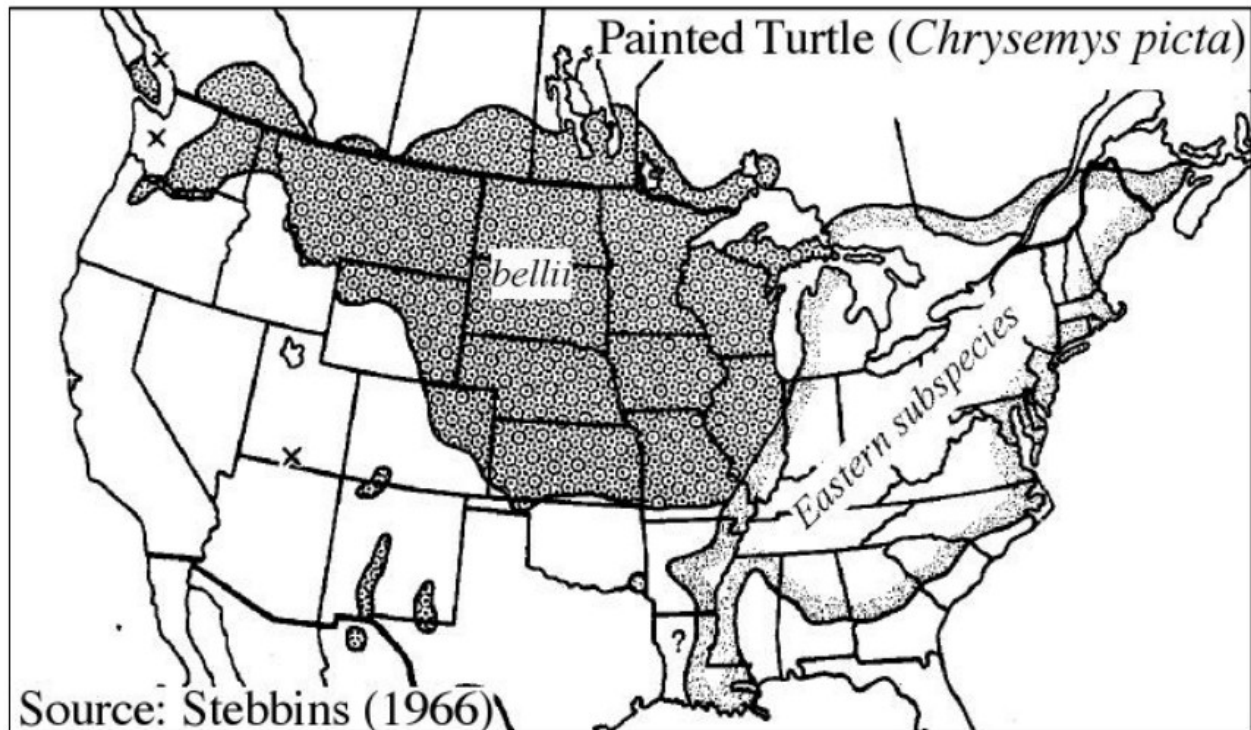


- Western Painted Turtles in the Rocky Mountains are listed as Special Concern in Canada.
- They are the northern-most occurring turtle in North America.
- They are the largest subspecies of the Painted Turtle.
- They select ponds and streams with muddy bottoms and abundant vegetation.
- They require basking areas to raise their body temperatures and digest food.
- Up to 23 eggs are laid in June in loose soil on gentle slopes.
- Courtship involves the male vibrating his claws beside the female's face.
- Females may store sperm viably for 2-3 years.
- The sex of the hatchlings is determined by the temperature the eggs incubate at.
- Eggs hatch in the fall, but hatchlings do not emerge until the following spring.
- It may take 8-15 years for them to reach sexual maturity, but they live for >50 years.
- They hibernate underwater, absorbing oxygen through their skin and cloaca (vent).
- They eat invertebrates, frogs, fish, carrion, and plant matter.



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Conservation

- Habitat loss and degradation is an ongoing concern for Western Painted Turtles.
- Wetlands are at risk of being converted to more 'useful' habitats.
- Many turtles are killed on roads by passing vehicles.

Get involved

- Read the recovery strategy for Western Painted Turtles [here](#).
- Conserve existing wetlands.
- Be aware of turtles on roadways.
- Do not harass or allow pets to harass turtles as they are laying their eggs.

Photo credit: Western Painted Turtle by Kelsey Marchand used with permission (front)
 Range map credit: COSEWIC. 2006. COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Western Painted Turtle *Chrysemys picta bellii* in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Ottawa. vii + 49 pp. (www.sararegistry.gc.ca/status/status_e.cfm).