

Endangered Species and Spaces

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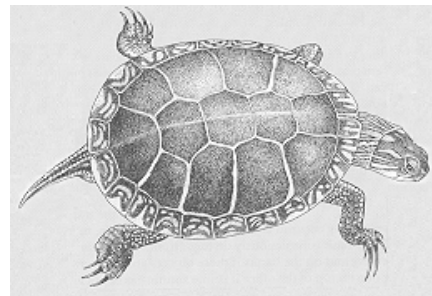
5.4 Painted Turtle: *Chrysemys picta* (Schneider)

Order: *Testudines*
Family: *Emydidae*

Status

Global Rank: G5
Provincial Rank: S3S4
COSEWIC: not addressed

Provincial Listing: [Blue list](#)



Distinguishing Features

This is a brightly coloured species with a black to greenish carapace (shell), margined and sometimes streaked with yellow or red. The head, neck limbs and tail are boldly striped with red and/or yellow. The western painted turtle is the largest of the painted turtles reaching a (shell) length of 250 mm. (Cook, 1984).

Distribution

Columbia Basin: Throughout the southern portion of the Columbia Basin (generally south of the Trans Canada Highway).

British Columbia: Valleys and lowlands on the coast from Campbell River and Powell River south, and in the southern interior from Little Fort and Golden south (Gregory and Campbell, 1984).

Global: Southern Canada and northern United States; widespread in the southeast and on the northern Great Plains of the U.S., but absent from the Great Basin and southwestern U.S. (Gregory and Campbell, 1984).

Habitat

Painted Turtles are found in a variety of lakes, ponds and slow-moving streams with basking sites and aquatic vegetation.

Threats

Habitat loss, both of productive pond habitat and nesting habitat is a primary threat. Roads bisecting movement routes to nesting sites also threaten females and dispersing juveniles. In some areas there may be exploitation for the pet trade (Cannings et al. 1999).

Biology

In May or June, females dig nests on land, usually on slopes with southern exposures within 150 m of water. A clutch of 4-20 eggs is laid and, upon hatching in late summer, juveniles often overwinter in the nest. Adults are omnivorous, juveniles are almost completely carnivorous on small invertebrates. Movements of several hundred metres on land are not uncommon, especially in the spring and fall when some turtles move between summer and hibernating ponds. The turtles hibernate in the water in bottom mud. The time of emergence is water temperature dependent, the turtles emerging as soon as there are some warm spring days. (Cannings et al. 1999).

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