

How to Use This Guide: Layout Description

This is a typical Species Identification & Information Card

that shows how each species will be presented. These pages describe how the card is organized and where to go for certain information.

Species Organization

Species are organized and colour-coded by taxonomic group (e.g. mammals: brown, birds: blue, etc.). Within each section species are organized by alphabetical order of the scientific name.

Page One

Common Name

Scientific Name
(Genus species)

Status

The status of species changes over time - listings in this guide are current as of March 2015. The national status is shown next to the Canadian flag and the provincial status is shown next to the Nova Scotia flag.

STATUS

Endangered



Endangered



Species at Risk Act (SARA) and/or Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)

Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act (NS ESA)

Blanding's Turtle
Emydoidea blandingii

STATUS Endangered Endangered

A small number are found in the province of Nova Scotia. It is listed as Endangered in both the federal and provincial status listings.

Habitat
Blanding's Turtles are found in freshwater wetlands and lakes (still-water streams, marshes, swamps, bays, vernal pools, and coves). They occur in dark, slow-moving waters, with muddy bottoms and dense aquatic vegetation, including sedges, Sphagnum, Sweetgale, Cow-lily, and Pickerel Weed. Females lay their eggs in exposed, gravelly or sandy areas in June and can travel multiple kilometres over land to reach nesting areas.

Species Description
The Blanding's Turtle has a high-domed, helmet-shaped and sized shell that is dark grey when dry and black with yellowish flecks when wet. It has a long neck and bright yellow chin and throat. Hatchlings are dark grey with a pale yellow throat, and neon-sized. Full-grown adults are about 18-25 cm in length.

carapace (back):
dark grey;
yellowish flecks

plastron (belly):
yellowish; big
black blotches

South facing nesting beach

Summer wetland habitat

Blanding's Turtles are found in **low** marshes. Watch out for them on the roads, especially in June and July when females are laying their eggs.

Range Map

Shaded where the species is known to occur:

red = summer

blue = winter

purple = year-round

Where species have been studied extensively specific ranges are highlighted. However, ranges are more general when less is known. Species may also be found outside the indicated range as new populations are discovered.

Range Description

Describes where the species is known or expected to occur in Nova Scotia, where it migrates (if not present in the province year-round), and population estimates or estimates of decline (if available).

Sighting Locations

Describes where and when people are most likely to see the species, which may not be in typical habitat. Flowering times are also included here for plants.

©
Name of photographer indicated
beside photo.

How You Can Help

The ways that people, organizations, and communities can help are highlighted. This includes simple things you can do every day at home, as well as volunteer and stewardship opportunities.

Threats To Survival

Reasons why the species is at risk are listed; some threats occur naturally (and are sometimes called “limiting factors” or “stressors”), but most are caused/inflicted by humans.

Similar Species

Although you might think you’ve seen a Species at Risk, there are many “look-alikes” out there with which they can be confused. To confirm your sighting, be sure to take a photo!

Although we provide photos and descriptions of most similar species, some are not covered in this guide. Others are very difficult to distinguish. We recommend you consult other resources (field guides, online materials) to further assist your identification.

Interesting Points

- Hatchlings can walk over 100 meters per day and are able to survive freezing for short periods of time.
- Juveniles do not mature until their early 20s, and individuals are believed to live longer than 50 years!
- They absorb oxygen through their skin in the winter.
- Females often return to nest in the same place each year.

Lend a helping hand!

Turtles are often encountered on the road in May and June during the nesting season. If it is safe, move them off the road in the same direction they were headed. Do not pick them up by their tails because this can cause serious harm. Painted, Blanding’s and Wood Turtles can be picked up by securely holding them with a grip on both the top and bottom of the shell. Snapping turtles require more caution and training, but can be picked up securely at the back of their shell. There are a number of safe handling methods that can be learned by visiting YouTube to watch Toronto Zoo’s video titled “How to help a Snapping Turtle Cross the Road!”



Watch for Blanding’s on the road when you see these signs

Similar Species

Click on page 58 to view descriptions and photos of the four species of freshwater turtles found in Nova Scotia: Painted Turtle, Blanding’s Turtle, Wood Turtle and Snapping Turtle.



Blanding’s Turtle bright yellow throat

Threats to Survival

- Habitat loss and degradation (cottages, development, roads, forestry).
- Changes in habitat function (hydroelectric dams, invasive fish).
- Human-caused mortality (even vehicles).
- Predation of nests and hatchlings.
- Illegal removal from the wild.

How You Can Help

Learn how to recognize Blanding’s Turtles and report sightings. If you see a turtle, observe and appreciate but do not disturb. Get involved with monitoring and protection efforts and learn how you can make a difference. Keep your yard free of food and attractants so that predator populations are not unnaturally elevated.



Contacts: Informative Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

Contact: Parks Canada (Regulatory) National Park and Marine Service (902) 482-2770

Info: www.speciesatrisk.ca/blanding, www.canamstrg.ca

Sighting Reports: 1-866-737-3447 or www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings

Stewardship: kaymacle@volunteer.ca, www.speciesatrisk.ca

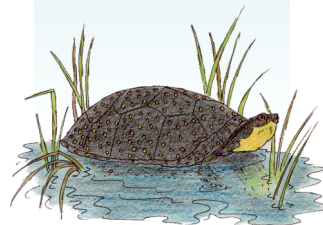
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Make sure to take this guide with you and report sightings.

Your observations make a real difference by increasing our knowledge about these rare and often difficult to find species.

Visit

www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings to learn about a reporting app for mobile devices.



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Contact: Info for agencies/jurisdictions helping to recover this species at risk; contact them for general inquiries.

Info: References for additional information about the species.

Sighting Reports: Where to go to report your sightings.

Stewardship: Contacts for volunteer and stewardship opportunities.