

# Working Lands for Wildlife

WLFW



## Bog Turtle

**Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania**

### Listing Status:

### Background

The bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*), America's smallest turtle, is federally listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Bog turtles depend upon a habitat mosaic of open, sunny, spring fed wetlands and scattered dry areas. Bog turtles can be an indicator of water quality and wetland function; the wetland habitats that they require provide important ecosystem services, including purifying water, recharging underground aquifers and absorbing floodwaters. The wetlands also support many rare plants and animals.

The greatest threats to bog turtles include habitat degradation and fragmentation from land conversion, habitat succession due to invasive exotic and native plants, and illegal trade and collecting. Changes in land use or alterations in water flow reduce a wetland's ability to function. Wetland habitats have been drained and filled for development, agriculture, road construction and impoundments have severely fragmented the remaining habitat and have created physical barriers, isolating existing bog turtle populations.

Private landowners control the majority of bog turtle habitat remaining in the northeast. Many of the wetlands are located in agricultural areas that are subject to frequent livestock grazing. Proper grazing management conserves habitat by slowing natural plant succession and minimizing the encroachment of invasive native and exotic plant species. However, heavy grazing may destroy bog turtle habitat that is necessary for turtle nesting, basking, foraging and cover.

NRCS has worked with the USFWS to initiate a range-wide Biological Opinion for bog turtle habitat restoration activities. Working Lands for Wildlife will provide financial and technical support to increase

### Focal Area Map

#### Bog Turtle



Resource Concern	Total Acres Needing Treatment
<b>Fish and Wildlife</b> Inadequate Habitat; Food and Cover; Habitat Degradation	
<b>Degraded Plant Condition</b> Excessive plant pest pressure	
<b>Water Quality Degradation</b> Excessive nutrients and pesticides	

### Goals / Objectives

Through Working Lands for Wildlife, NRCS will assist private landowners combat habitat fragmentation and degradation to restore bog turtle populations in seven states, and increase landowner confidence that the conservation practices they volunteer to implement will not harm the species or its habitat. Restoration activities will complement the existing NRCS Wetland

## Actions

- Protect, maintain, and restore bog turtle habitat.
- Increase connectivity of existing bog turtle habitat.
- Improve weed and invasive species management.
- Support sustainable grazing management that supports native plant communities.
- Promote use of government programs that provide incentives for development or restoration of habitat on private lands.

Core Practices	Supporting Practices	
643 Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats	314 Brush Management	528 Prescribed Grazing
644 Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	315 Herbaceous Weed Control	578 Stream Crossing
645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	327 Conservation Cover	580 Streambank and Shoreline Protection
	338 Prescribed Burning	587 Structure for Water Control
	382 Fence	614 Watering Facility
	391 Riparian Forest Buffer	647 Early Successional Habitat Development/Management
	393 Filter Strip	
	395 Stream Habitat Improvement	

## Outcomes and Impacts

Landowners will enhance, restore and protect habitat for bog turtle, aiding in the implementation of its recovery plan and increase landowner confidence that the conservation practices they implement will not harm the species or its habitat.



## Partners