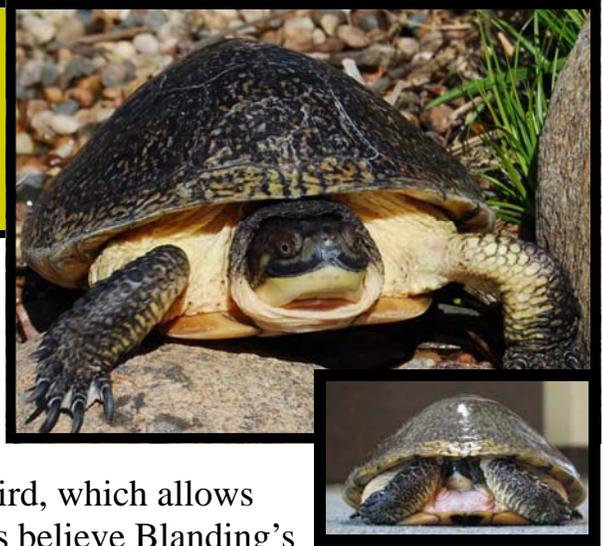


Blanding's Turtle

Emys blandingii
aka Emydoidea blandingii
Natural History



Description: The Blanding's Turtle is one of our region's most recognizable turtles due to its bright yellow chin and dark "smiling" mustache. It reaches 6-10 inches in length and has a unique domed carapace (top shell) with scattered yellow flecks. The plastron (underside shell) is hinged across the front third, which allows the turtles to close its shell when threatened. Scientists believe Blanding's Turtles are related to Box Turtles. It was named after William Blanding, an early naturalist.

Vocalizations: Blanding's Turtles communicate by touch.

Breeding: Blanding's Turtles do not reach sexual maturity until they are 14-20 years old. Mating occurs in April-May and 6-21 elliptical eggs are laid in June. The incubation temperature of the nest determines whether the developing turtles will be males or females.

Distribution: These turtles are predominantly found in the Great Lakes region of Canada and the United States, although they are threatened and endangered in much of their range.

Habitat: Blanding's Turtles live in marshes, swamps, bogs, ponds, quiet streams and shallow bays. They are semi-aquatic, and need access to both upland and wetland habitats. Wetlands with mud bottoms and aquatic vegetation are preferred as the turtles overwinter in the muddy bottoms of deeper wetlands.

Diet: Blanding's Turtles are primarily carnivorous and will eat crayfish, snails, insects, frogs, fish, earthworms, slugs, as well as some grasses and berries. Blanding's Turtles can swallow their food both in and out of the water, unlike other turtle species.

Lifespan: Blanding's Turtles can live to be 60-100 years old.

Conservation Status: In Minnesota and Wisconsin they are considered to be a threatened species due to habitat loss, illegal collection for the pet trade, road kills and increased predation. Studies are underway to help protect this species. In 1980 The Nature Conservancy protected an area in Weaver Dunes in 1980 which is home to the single largest breeding population of Blanding's Turtles in the U.S.

