

## Western Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta belli*)

Status: NSS4

Distribution and Abundance: The western painted turtle forages in water, feeding on fish, live and dead plants, vertebrates and invertebrates. Females deposit eggs in soft soil in sunny areas. Hatchlings probably overwinter in the nest, not emerging until spring. Painted turtles are not as highly aquatic as some other turtle species. They often can be found sunning themselves on logs at the edge of the water. Western painted turtles sometimes carry salmonella due to their diet of fish; because of this, they are less commonly sold as pets as they once were.

Habitat: This species lives in swampy habitats, small lakes, ponds and muddy streams below 6,000 feet in elevation in the plains zone. In Wyoming, it occurs only in the eastern counties, abundant near Wheatland and in Muddy Creek in Laramie County. Elsewhere, it ranges from Michigan's Upper Peninsula, through Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri west to Colorado and Wyoming, and in the north through Montana, eastern Washington and southern British Columbia.

### Problems:

- Population status, distribution and habitat data are lacking for this species.
- Habitat changes and other factors may be adversely affecting this species, but lack of data precludes identification of specific problems and development of management recommendations.

### Conservation Actions:

- Survey and monitor population distribution status and habitat trends.
- Research critical life history and habitat information needs.
- Develop management recommendations based on resulting data.

### Related NSSC Ranked Species:

Common snapping turtle, western spiny softshell turtle.

References and Additional Reading: Baxter and Stone 1980; Scott 1996; Wyoming Game and Fish Department 1999.

Baxter, G.T., and M. D. Stone. 1980. Amphibians and reptiles of Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 137pp.

Scott, N.J., Jr. 1996. Ecosystem disturbance and wildlife conservation in western grasslands: A symposium proceedings. USDA Forest Service. General Technical Report RM-GTR-285. Fort Collins, Colo. pp 40-53.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 1999. Atlas of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians in Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 189pp.

# Western Painted Turtle 4 Total Wos Points from (1982-1994)

