

# Western Pond Turtles



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Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission  
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Photo Credit: Simon Wray

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## Oregon's Native Turtles


- ▶ Semi-aquatic freshwater
- ▶ Part of a healthy ecosystem
  - Predator & Prey
- ▶ Important for other reasons
  - Aesthetically
  - Spiritually
  - Culturally
  - Historically
  - Intrinsically
- ▶ Affected by our actions +/-
  - Declining

Photo Credit: Grace Alfieri



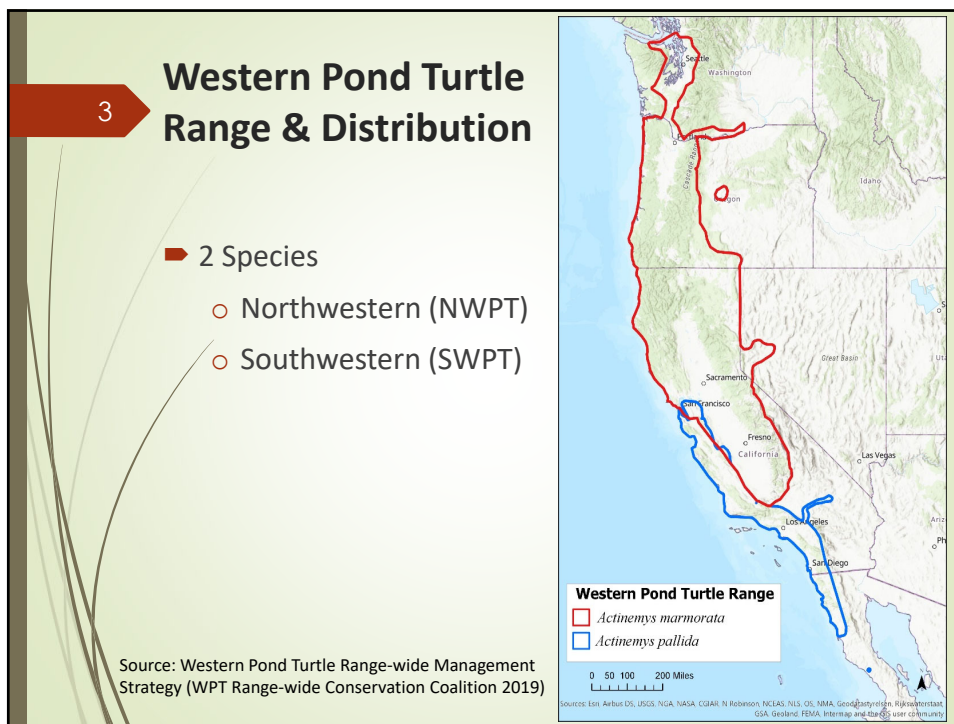
**Western Painted Turtle**  
*(Chrysemys picta bellii)*

Photo Credit: ODFW



**Northwestern Pond Turtle**  
*(Actinemys marmorata)*

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## Western Pond Turtle – Management Status

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Entity	NatureServe State Rank	Status
Washington	S1: critically imperiled	State Endangered; SGCN in SWAP
Oregon	S2: imperiled	Protected Wildlife, State Sensitive-Critical, SGCN (Strategy Species) in SWAP (OCS)
California	S3: rare, uncommon or threatened	Species of Special Concern, <i>A. marmorata</i> Priority 3 & <i>A. pallida</i> Priority 1, SGCN in SWAP
Nevada	S2: imperiled	Species of Conservation Priority in SWAP
Mexico	--	None
Canada	--	Extirpated; Species at Risk Act (Priority 2); 2015 Recovery Strategy
IUCN Red List	--	VU - Vulnerable
USFS	--	Sensitive Species (CA, OR & WA)
BLM	--	Sensitive Species (CA, OR, WA & NV); BLM Amphibian and Reptile Strategic Plan
USFWS	--	At-risk species, Petitioned for Listing (2015)

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## Key Life History Traits

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- ▶ Ectotherms
  - Regulate body temp through behavior (habitat selection)
  - Maximizes growth (body mass vs. heat production)
  - Allows inactivity for extended periods (cold / drought)
- ▶ Long-lived
- ▶ Late-maturing
- ▶ Naturally high mortality rated in eggs/young
- ▶ Loss of adults has significant implications


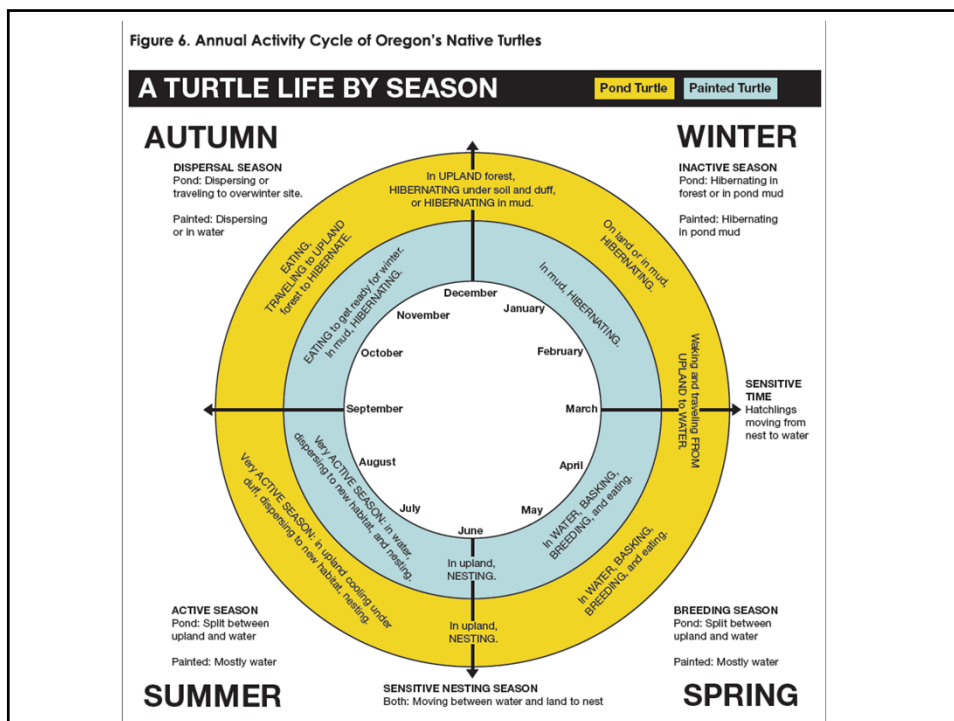


Photo Credit: Samara Group

Management Implications: Reproductive biology makes them vulnerable. Short-term monitoring yields limited information.

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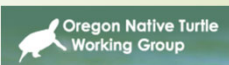
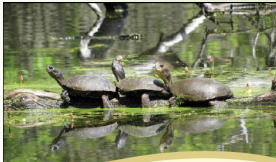


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## ODFW's NWPT Conservation Efforts

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- Building partnerships
- Education & Outreach
- Habitat projects
- Occupancy / Distribution surveys
- Mark / Recap
- Conservation Assessment (2009)
- Research (e.g., hatchling)
- Invasive species removal
- Data compilation
- Turtle BMPs (2015)
- AZA S.A.F.E. WPT Project (2015 - )
- Federal grant (C-SWG: 2017-2020)

GUIDANCE FOR CONSERVING OREGON'S NATIVE TURTLES INCLUDING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES


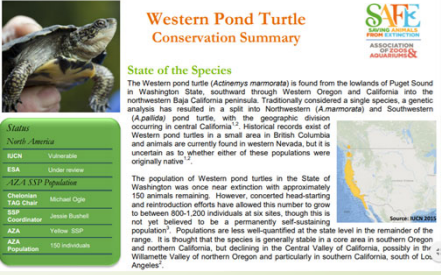


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## Conservation Effort: AZA's S.A.F.E. Western Pond Turtle Project

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- ▶ Range-wide Conservation Action Plan
- ▶ Project Areas:
  1. Range-wide Coalition
  2. Public Engagement
  3. Research
    - Shell Disease
    - Population Assessment
    - Habitat Mapping
  4. Species Survival Plan
    - Sustainability
    - Husbandry

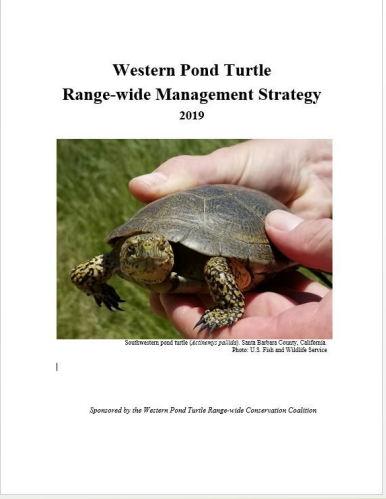
<https://www.aza.org/SAFE-western-pond-turtle>

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## WPT Range-wide Conservation Coalition Accomplishments

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- ▶ MOU (signing *in process*)
  - Signatories: USFS, BLM, USFWS, NPS, USGS, DoD, CDFW, ODFW\*, WDFW, NDOW, AZA
- ▶ Range-wide Management Strategy (2019)
  - Goal: Long-term viability of both species of Western Pond Turtle



\*ODFW signed MOU in Dec. 2019

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## Oregon's Management Regions & Priority Conservation Areas

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- MRs
- PCA Selection Criteria
- Delineate PCAs
  - Existing occurrence data
  - Connectivity (now & future)
- Continue / Establish long-term monitoring sites
- Develop Action Plans for "sites" within each PCA, implement conservation actions

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**Proposed MRs and Priority Conservation Areas**

California and Nevada are done; it's Oregon's turn.

**September 2018**  
Workshop for CA marmorata  
USFS Fire Center, Sacramento

- Draft PCAs for CA marmorata
- Please provide feedback via your packets

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## USFWS Grant: Advancing Western Pond Turtle Conservation - Background

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- Funded by a Competitive State Wildlife Grant (C-SWG)
- Multi-state: WA, OR, CA
- Federal award = \$498,777
- Timeframe: ~~3~~ 4 years (Sept. 2017 – ~~Dec. 2020~~ Sept. 2021)
- Many partners involved contributing \$440,843 non-federal match




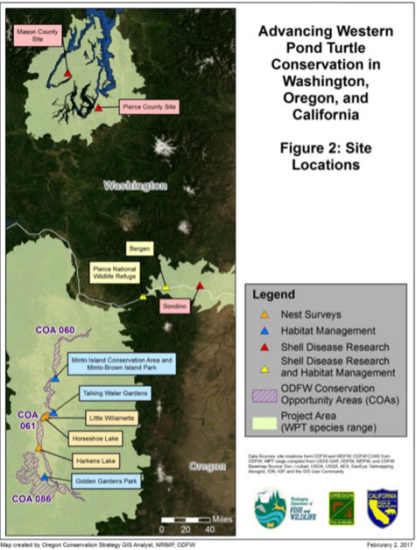
Photo Credit: Keith Kohl

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## Advancing Western Pond Turtle Conservation - Objectives

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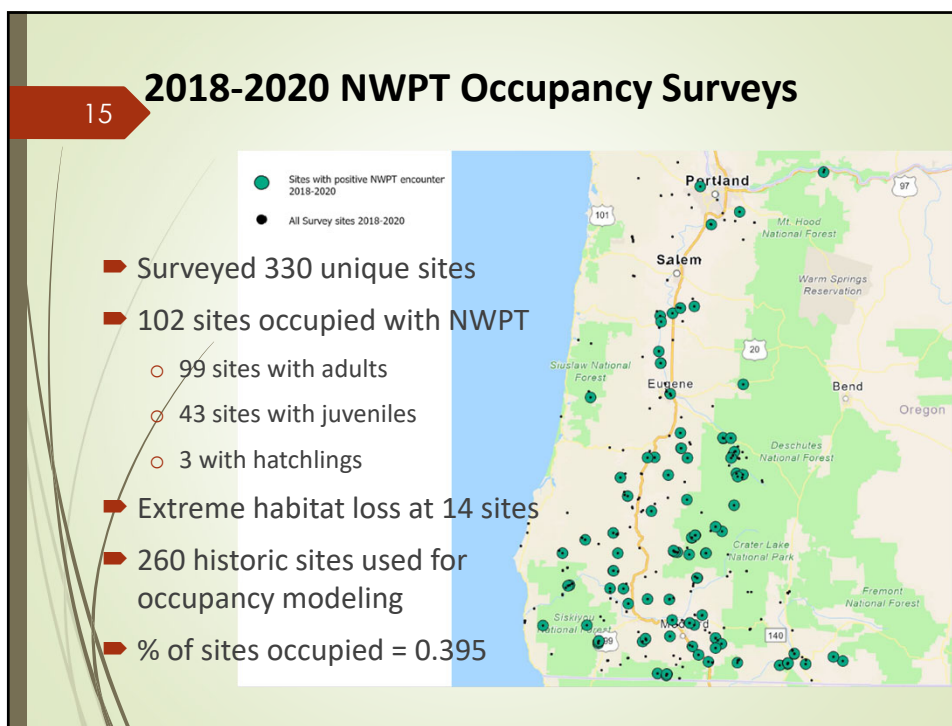
- Objective 1 - Habitat Restoration and Management Actions (3 in OR)
- Objective 2 - Data Compilation, Surveys, Occupancy Modeling, and ID of PCAs
- Objective 3 - Shell Disease Research (etiology and treatment)



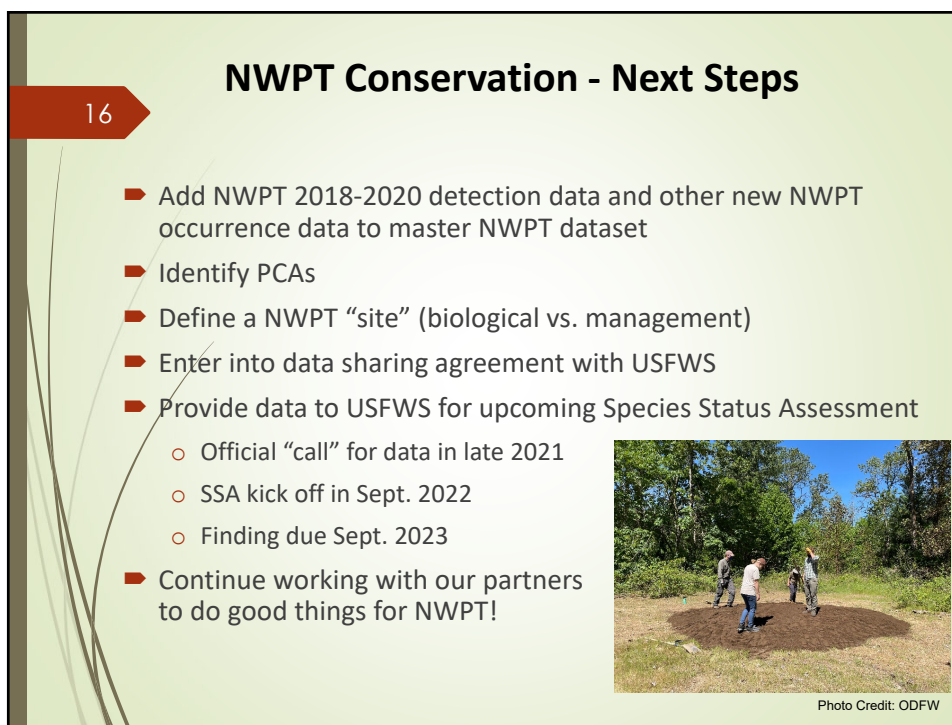
Advancing Western Pond Turtle Conservation in Washington, Oregon, and California  
Figure 2: Site Locations

Map created by Oregon Conservation Strategy GIS Analyst, MRM/ODFW February 2, 2017

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