

## **Blanding's Turtle** *Emydoidia blandingii*

**Habitat Preference:** Blanding's turtles most commonly inhabit areas with shallow, slow-moving water and abundant aquatic vegetation. Emergent vegetation is very important. Small juveniles primarily use emergent sedge (*Carex*) habitat, larger juveniles use sedge/water interfaces and the largest juveniles are found in open water. Therefore, diverse vegetation is necessary to support Blanding's turtle populations. Suitable nest sites for Blanding's turtles are upland areas with well drained, sandy loam or sandy soils.



### **Threats:**

- Disappearance of grassland component
  - Conversion of prairie to cultivated ground.
- Blanding's turtles are confirmed baskers. Tree invasion creates too much shade which is detrimental to the success of this species.
- Wetland loss due to draining or siltation.
- Conversion of shallow marsh habitat to cropland especially when associated with deep marsh habitat.
- Wetlands many times are drawn down to create emergent vegetation; these draw downs can be detrimental to Blanding's Turtle populations. Fall draw downs are most detrimental because turtles can dehydrate during hibernation.
- Invasion of non-native plants.

### **Habitat Improvement Guidelines:**

- Wetland Restoration:
  - Need 15-40% open water
  - Diverse, abundant emergent vegetation.
  - Less than 25% cattail and bulrush coverage.
  - Optimum water depth 24-36 inches with some areas 36 inches or deeper for wintering.
- Upland Restoration:
  - Provide suitable nesting areas with sandy loam or sandy soil less than 1/8 mile from wetland.
  - Need 60% grassland.
- Remove encroaching woody species while turtles are inactive; prior to April.
- Fall drawdowns have been linked to winterkill of Blanding's turtles.
- Be aware of Blanding's turtles crossing roads between April and October.
- Prescribed fire should be done prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> or after November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Nest protection