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Assessment of Eastern Painted Turtle Population in an Artificial Pond

A population of Eastern Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) has colonized a small (0.1-acre), 65-year-old artificial pond located in Ward Pound Ridge Reservation in Westchester County. Eutrophication has significantly reduced pond volume and size, while reforestation has decreased basking and nesting sites. Total population size, ratios of mature to immature members of each sex, and nesting/hatching success will be assessed to evaluate whether there is any significant trend to support the suggestion that these turtles are locally endangered. Preliminary work during the summer of 1999 utilized a combination of dip netting and floating traps set for 24–48 hour periods. Captured turtles were marked for future identification using a scute notching code. Recorded data consisted of: species ID; capture method; sex; estimated age; weight; carapace length, width, and height; results of egg palpation; microlocation of capture, air and water temperature, weather, and any distinguishing characteristics. A total of 15 individual turtles of two species, 4 snapping turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*) and 11 *C. picta*, were collected in 28 captures. The *C. picta* population was comprised of: 6 mature females (average mass = 386 g, average size = 140 × 103 × 52 mm), 4 mature males (average mass = 235 g, average size = 122 × 91 × 41 mm), and one hatchling (yearling). To develop a high degree of confidence in the estimated total population size, trapping will continue through the 2001 season.