

Abstract of the Survey Report
Petrie Island Species at Risk Turtles
2008

Friends of Petrie Island (FOPI)
Ottawa Stewardship Council (OSC)
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PETRIE ISLAND SPECIES AT RISK TURTLE SURVEY (2008)

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INTRODUCTION

This abstract summarizes the report of a project to study the distribution of species at risk (SAR) turtles on Petrie Island. The project was a joint venture of the Friends of Petrie Island (FOPI) and the Ottawa Stewardship Council (OSC).

PROJECT PURPOSE

To survey species at risk turtle populations on and around Petrie Island, and to learn more about their numbers, distribution, and habitat.

TURTLE SPECIES ON PETRIE ISLAND

Four native and one non-native species of turtle have been observed on Petrie Island in recent years. Two of these species are designated as species at risk by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO):

Blanding's Turtle *Emydoidea Blandingii* – Status: **Threatened**

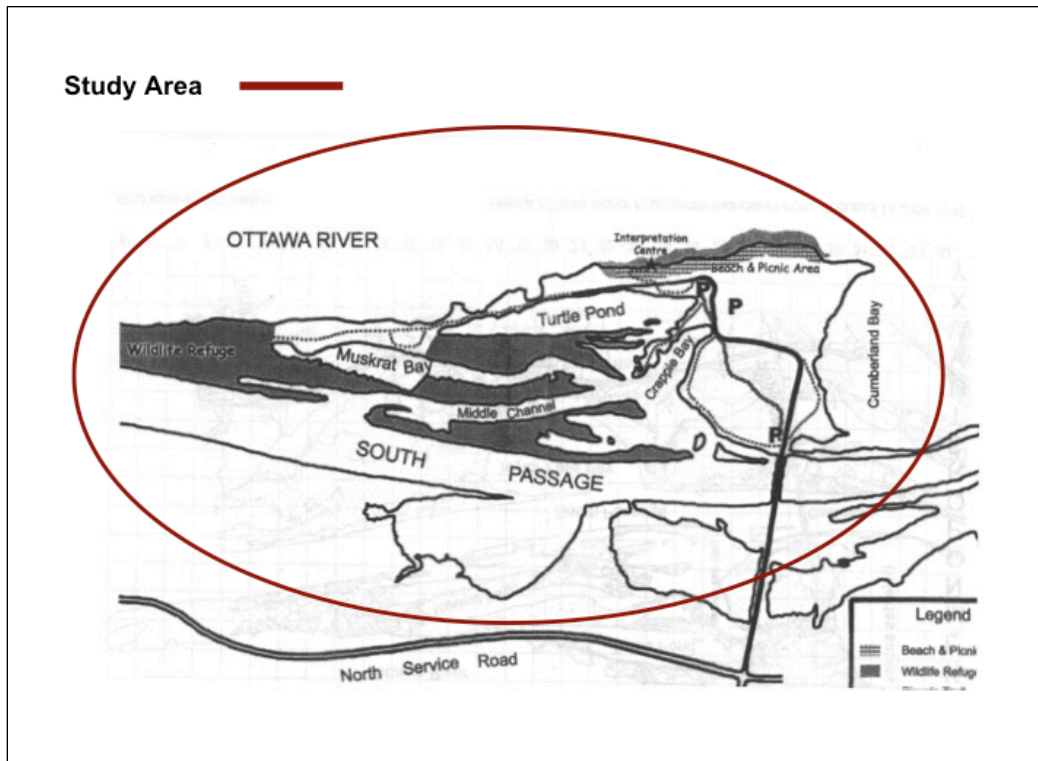
Northern Map Turtle *Graptemys Geographica* – Status: **Special Concern**

METHODOLOGY

General The survey was conducted by volunteers and staff of the Friends of Petrie Island and the Ottawa Stewardship Council.

Survey Dates The survey was conducted from 23 April to 25 June, 2008.

Study Area Petrie Island (45°30' 75°29') is situated on the Ottawa River, immediately north of the suburb of Orléans (City of Ottawa). The study area is shown on the map below.



Methodology The survey employed a straightforward methodology of observing the area for SAR turtles, visually identifying the turtle species, and recording the location, date and other relevant details, including whether the turtle was nesting, basking, etc.

A core survey team of two individuals (Bill Bower and Richard Burnford), independently and according to individual schedules, walked and observed the study area over 26 days during the study period, for a combined total of approx. 70 hours of observations. FOPI volunteers and staff also monitored the nature trails, picnic area, and parking lots as part of their daily routine when on the Island.

Public input was solicited via emails to various groups and via brochures and signs in the Interpretation Centre and Oziles Marina and Bait Shop. There was also a web-based brochure and a survey form on the FOPI website.



Bill Bower

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Blanding's Turtles



2008 is the fourth consecutive year that there have been confirmed sightings of Blanding's turtles on Petrie Island. One was seen in 2005, two in 2006, one in 2007, and two in 2008. It has not been determined if these sightings were of different individuals.

Northern Map Turtle

Northern Map Turtles are frequently seen on and around Petrie Island from late spring to summer. It is not unusual to see more than 20 Northern Map turtles basking or nesting at various locations and at any one time of day.

The survey team was able to locate and confirm many of the areas on the Island that are used by Northern Map turtles for basking and nesting.

Northern Map juveniles were also observed on two occasions in 2008 (June and July), indicating that at least some nests survive the heavy toll of depredation by raccoons and other predators.



CONCLUSIONS

The 2008 survey met its objectives. The presence of Blanding's turtle on the Islands was confirmed and a better understanding of the distribution of Northern Map turtles was obtained.