

# FEASIBILITY STATEMENTS FOR BLANDING'S TURTLE GOAL & OBJECTIVES

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**Goal: Maintain a self-sustaining population of Blanding's turtles in Maine.**

**Information Objective: Estimate population distribution and abundance, population trend, population dynamics, self-sustaining population, limiting factors, habitat requirements, available habitat, and amount and type of protection provided Blanding's turtle habitat in Maine by the year 1996.**

**Population Objective: Increase the population of Blanding's turtles to the self-sustaining population level by the year 2000 (if not already at that level).**

**Habitat Objective: Conserve the quantity and quality of habitat necessary to support the self-sustaining population of Blanding's turtles by the year 2000.**

**Desirability:** There is widespread public interest and support for restoration of Endangered and Threatened Species and growing support for Maine's reptiles and amphibians. The Maine Endangered Species Act is explicit in its charge to maintain or enhance populations of rare and endangered species and the ecosystems on which they depend. The public has demonstrated its support of this through voluntary financial support of the existing turtle research program. There is a growing desire in the public for perpetuation of intact natural ecosystems including their flora and fauna. The Blanding's and spotted turtle have become cornerstone species in regards to wetland conservation in southern Maine, and as such, their perpetuation is greatly desired by many.

**Feasibility:** Most of the informational objective must be achieved before the feasibility of protecting Blanding's turtle habitat can be assessed. Sufficient information could be attained with 3 to 5 years of intensive study. One year of survey work and one year of telemetry and population studies have been completed. A graduate student at the University of Maine will continue studies through 1993. The feasibility of achieving informational objectives hinges on the Department's ability to obtain funding for these research and inventory programs.

**Capability of Habitat:** The types of habitats utilized by Blanding's turtles in Maine are unknown. The quantity, quality, availability, and distribution of their habitats are unknown. Therefore, we do not know if there is sufficient habitat available to support a self-sustaining population in Maine.

## *Blanding's Turtle Feasibility Statements*

Possible Consequences: Wetland loss and degradation, habitat fragmentation, and nest predation are believed to be the major factors limiting this species. Habitat protection will be needed to conserve the quantity and quality of habitats necessary to support a self-sustaining population. Habitat protection could entail acquisition, voluntary agreements, easements, and Essential and Significant Wildlife Habitats zoning. Some land uses, activities, or development could be restricted to conserve turtle habitats. These actions will be viewed as undesirable by some people.