

A top-down photograph of a turtle resting on a bed of vibrant green grass. The turtle's shell is the central focus, showing a complex pattern of dark brown and lighter tan or yellowish-brown scutes. The scutes have a distinct concentric growth pattern. The turtle's head and front legs are partially visible, tucked under the shell. The background is a dense field of green grass blades, some of which are slightly out of focus, creating a natural, outdoor setting.

NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

EPA Wetland Program Development Grants

Policy and Implementation Committee

May 28, 2021



Proposed Study

“Habitat use, activity range, nesting, and overwintering of the eastern box turtle”

Why box turtles?

Species of special concern in NJ

multiple threats (habitat destruction, pet trade, mowers, tractors, and roads)

declining throughout range

distribution and status unknown in NJ

Concern with development, agriculture, forestry,
prescribed fire, roadside and utility line mowing,
and habitat management



Why box turtles?

Many reptile species rely on upland landscapes and most human activities occur in uplands

Box turtles use wetlands for foraging, thermoregulation, and overwintering

Know little about most reptile species because limited funding to study them

Project Details

Use radio telemetry to study eastern box turtles

Determine activity range size

Measure environment, habitat structure, and behavior

Wetland habitat types needed for foraging,
thermoregulation, and overwintering

Upland habitat types needed for foraging,
nesting, and overwintering

Timing of nesting, emergence, and overwintering







Timeline and Cost

Three years of field work (2022 - 2024)

One year to analyze data and write report (2025)

Maximum total cost ~\$433,000

~\$325,000 from EPA (maximum provided)

~\$108,000 (25% Commission match)

PCF Fund - Science and Research



Applications

Evaluate adequacy of upland buffers to protect wetlands

**Value upland and wetland habitats in NJDEP
state-wide wildlife habitat map**

**Inform NJDEP Forest Service natural resource
stewardship plans**

**Guide the timing of forestry activities, utility and
roadside mowing, and prescribed burning**

Support

Letters of support from:

New Jersey Audubon

Pinelands Preservation Alliance

New Jersey Conservation Foundation

NJDEP Endangered and Nongame Species Program

Policy and Implementation Committee

