

## Western Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*)

The western pond turtle can be found in the lowlands of Puget Sound, southward through western Oregon and California into the northernmost areas of the Baja California peninsula. The species lives in slow streams, wetlands, ponds, and lakes, and is typically found in small, isolated populations. By 1990, the wild population in the state of Washington declined to an estimated 150 animals, prompting the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to classify the species as Endangered in 1993. In addition to habitat degradation, high levels of hatchling predation by bullfrogs and a form of ulcerative shell disease previously unknown in this species are threatening the turtle with extinction in the state. Find out more on the [IUCN Red List](#).



Contact: Fred Koontz at  
[Fred.Koontz@zoo.org](mailto:Fred.Koontz@zoo.org)

### Key Workshop Goals

A Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) workshop was conducted for the Washington state populations of this species at Woodland Park Zoo on 15-17 November 2012. The following goals were agreed by workshop participants to be integral to the survival of the species in Washington. **Click on the text in the table below to learn more about each goal and its corresponding actions.**

Populations
Understand the epidemiology of ulcerative shell disease, the survival rate of affected individuals, and the potential impact to reproductive capacity of infected adults.
Obtain and improve estimates of <i>in situ</i> hatchlings and juvenile survival rates at each population site.
Better catalogue cause-specific mortality for adults.
Habitat
Work to identify and establish one new site in Puget Sound within the next 5 years to introduce the western pond turtle into a new habitat patch.
Identify a back-up site in the Columbia River Gorge for possible re-introduction.
Minimize impact to western pond turtles from salmon habitat restoration at the Pierce National Wildlife Refuge site.
Continue bullfrog eradication at the Sondino site.
Population Viability Analysis
Understand what processes are negatively impacting these populations and how they are acting on specific demographic stages.
Lower adult mortality rates to the degree possible.
Husbandry
More effectively share husbandry and field data among primary and secondary stakeholders through an improved communication strategy.
Develop a standardized set of best husbandry practices for purposes of creating a larger number of healthy individuals to bolster wild populations through release.

**More detailed information about the actions being taken to fulfill these goals can be found in the full workshop report available at <http://www.cbsg.org/content/western-pond-turtle-phva-2012>.**

*Workshop organizers: The Western Pond Turtle Recovery Project which includes Woodland Park Zoo, Oregon Zoo, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and Washington State Parks*

*Workshop sponsors: Woodland Park Zoo, Northwest Zoo and Aquarium Alliance, Oregon Zoo, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife*