

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcast

More bog turtles

Greetings, and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcast.

The fruit of the day search for bog turtles was meager. A lone individual. The search also turned up a snapping turtle, a suspected bog turtle predator. In fact, one of the perils of feeling through mud and muck for bog turtles is that instead of grabbing a bog turtle you wrap your hand around part of a snapping turtle.

As we previously mentioned bog turtles are North America's smallest turtle and found only in bogs of the Eastern United States. There are two distinct populations, the northern one and the southern one, which is centered on Western North Carolina. In 1997, the northern population was placed on the endangered species list.

One of the great threats to bog turtles is poaching, however it isn't the only threat. Here in the Southern Appalachians these animals are only found in Southern Appalachian bogs, an extremely rare habitat. Bogs are fragile places and can be degraded when water flow in to or out of the bog is altered. When chemicals wash into a bog from upstream, when invasive plants gain a foothold and begin changing the native plant community, or in worst case scenarios, bogs can simply be filled in and built upon.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this is Gary Peeples.