

Spring, 2007

## NH Reptile and Amphibian Reporting Program (RAARP)



### Dear RAARP Participant:

It's that time of year again. We had a great reporting year and exciting things are happening in New Hampshire that will benefit our reptile and amphibian populations. Keep up the good work and check out the 2006 summary to see how your reports compared to others.

Remember that **Pictures** and **exact locations of sightings** are extremely important for biologists to verify your reports. If you are unable to take a photograph, note a description of the size, coloration, distinctive patterns or markings, and habitat. This information substantially increases our success in verifying reports. Recordings or descriptions of their calls are also helpful.

### What do we do with your reports?

ALL records get incorporated into a database at NH Fish & Game. These records help biologists determine the distribution of species in New Hampshire. Verified reports of rare species are used for protecting reptiles and amphibians during land-use planning and conservation and help researchers target specific areas to study.

### Want to receive electronic RAARP updates?

If you would like to receive occasional updates (not likely to exceed 4 per year) on RAARP or other Nongame Programs, you can sign up for electronic updates. Instructions: Go to the NH Fish & Game website (<http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/>), on the left side, click on 'sign up for e-news', then click on 'Nongame and Endangered Wildlife' and fill in the other appropriate information.

### Wildlife Action Plan Completed!

Help is on the way!!!! For the first time in history, state nongame programs across the nation are receiving some dedicated federal funding to protect the species of greatest conservation concern, including reptiles and amphibians. NH has completed our first ever Wildlife Action Plan, which identifies threats and conservation strategies to protect our valuable resources. Many reptiles and amphibians and their habitats have been thoroughly evaluated and can be viewed as downloadable .pdf files. Although NHFG hopes to have more funding available for reptile and amphibian conservation, we still need your help. Federal funding requires an equal state match and the NH state match comes directly from volunteer contributions to the Nongame Program. For more details on the Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy, see: [http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/wildlife\\_plan.htm](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/wildlife_plan.htm)

### WHAT'S NEW or COMING??

#### NHFG Snake Page

To assist with identification, NHFG created a web page with information and photographs on snakes. We are in the process of adding web pages for FROGS, SALAMANDERS, and TURTLES. To find these pages, go to the NHFG website ([http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Nongame/reptiles\\_amphibians.htm](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Nongame/reptiles_amphibians.htm)).

*Reptile and Amphibian Distribution Maps:*

We have created distribution maps (based largely on RAARP volunteer observations) for all reptiles and amphibians of New Hampshire. This information, along with photographs and species descriptions, will be posted to our website this Spring. We realize that town maps will not be complete for any species, but these maps will help you to target areas that need additional investigation. Check up on the NH Nongame & Endangered Species website periodically for updates. In an effort to reduce waste, we hope to post all materials on the web. Some material has already been posted including RAARP slips (website). Annual mailings will still occur for those who do not have internet access.

*Web-based reporting*

NHFG received a grant to start developing a web-based reporting program. We hope that volunteers like yourself will be able to report your reptile and amphibian sightings via a user friendly web reporting program by next spring.

*Habitat Management Guidelines for Reptiles and Amphibians*

The Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) recently produced "Habitat Management Guidelines for Amphibians and Reptiles of the Northeastern United States." For more information or to purchase a copy, go to <http://www.parcplace.org>.

***A complimentary copy was mailed to the RAARP volunteer who submitted the greatest number of verified reports for 2006 including a number of rare species reports. Congratulations!!***

For additional RAARP packages or questions regarding packages, please contact Rita Boisvert at 271-5859.

Electronic **reports and photographs can be sent via e-mail** to: [RAARP@wildlife.nh.gov](mailto:RAARP@wildlife.nh.gov). If submitting reports via email, please make sure that you provide adequate details on your observations (see format on reporting slips). Attached you will find the 2006 report summary.

It was a GREAT year!!! Thank you for your participation in RAARP and have a great season!

Sincerely,

Michael Marchand  
Nongame & Endangered Wildlife Program

## 2006 Summary Reports:

We have entered **611** reports for 2006, compared to 404 reports from the 2005 season, 414 reports in 2004, 210 reports in 2003, 195 in 2002, 114 in 2001, and 156 in 2000. Many of these reports included rare species. **GREAT JOB!!!** This brings the RAARP grand total up to **6188** records since its initiation in 1992.

<b><u>Amphibians*</u></b>		<b>Salamanders</b>	
<b>Frogs/Toads</b>	<b># of Reports 2006</b>		<b># of Reports 2006</b>
Wood Frog	41	Eastern Newt	17
Spring Peeper	36	Spotted Salamander	15
Green Frog	56	Redback Salamander	8
Pickerel Frog	20	Northern Two-Lined Salamander	3
Gray Treefrog	19	Northern Dusky Salamander	3
American Toad	48	Blue-Spotted & Jefferson complex	4
Bullfrog	11	Spring Salamander	1
Northern Leopard Frog	5	Four-toed salamander	2
Fowler's Toad	4		
Mink Frog	0		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>240</b>		<b>53</b>
<b><u>Reptiles*</u></b>		<b>Snakes</b>	
<b>Turtles</b>	<b># of Reports 2006</b>		<b># of Reports 2006</b>
Blanding's Turtle	46	Common Garter Snake	59
Common Musk Turtle	3	Eastern Hognose Snake	1
Eastern Box Turtle	1	Milk snake	13
Painted Turtle	63	Northern Water Snake	25
Red-eared Slider	0	Redbelly Snake	6
Snapping Turtle	39	Racer	10
Spotted Turtle	17	Eastern Ribbon Snake	6
Wood Turtle	17	Smooth Green Snake	2
		Brown Snake	3
		Ringneck Snake	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>186</b>		<b>127</b>

**\*NOTE:** The numbers reported above represent the number of observations REPORTED. These observations have not been validated (especially for species like Fowler's toad and Leopard frog) and these reports do not necessarily represent distinct populations.

***Frogs/Toads:***

Green frogs, American toads, wood frogs, and spring peepers were the most commonly reported frogs. No Mink frogs were reported...again. Mink frogs have a northerly distribution (north of the White Mountains). I encourage our northern NH RAARP volunteers to report this species and if you don't live up north, it would make a great get-away weekend. Listen for their call (sounds like hitting 2 boards together). If you are fortunate to capture one, try to take a good photo!! Mink frogs can look very similar to our more common green frog. We need verified reports of Leopard frogs; photos are crucial!! Many reports of Leopard frogs turn out to be Pickerel frogs. Focus searches during late summer in floodplains, fields, and agricultural areas along rivers.

***Salamanders:***

Salamanders to keep a look out for in the next year:

Jefferson and blue-spotted salamanders – breed in vernal pools in early spring

Four-toed salamanders – Associated with sphagnum wetlands. This species can be difficult to locate.

Marbled salamander - State endangered species; Be sure to take a photo if you come across one of these and call NHFG ASAP.

Spring & dusky salamanders – live in/near streams and seeps.

***Turtles:***

One of the best results of the year was the number of Blanding's, spotted, and wood turtles reported.

Excellent job!!! Eastern box turtles are difficult to verify because of the number of released pets over the years (It is now Illegal to possess Eastern Box, Blanding's, spotted, and wood turtles as pets in NH). We are on the lookout for our first population of Box turtles. Keep a look out for red-eared sliders and other non-native turtles. Non-native turtles can compete with our native species and potentially introduce diseases. Pet turtles should NEVER be released into the wild.

***Snakes:***

Hognose snakes are state threatened and their sandy habitat continues to be developed in southern New Hampshire. To protect this species, we need to document the best places where it still occurs. Timber rattlesnake, black racer, ribbon snake, and smooth green snake are the other snakes in the greatest need of additional reports....but all snakes are underrepresented and need more reports. Check out the SNAKE page on the NHFG website to help with identification.