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Bog Turtle: A Shy Little Guy



July 15, 2010 - posted by [fpb](#)

Less than two weeks left until our [Watauga Riverkeeper Festival](#). Come out on July 24, from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. at the Community Park in Valle Crucis, N.C.! Enjoy a day of outdoor recreation and a celebration of the river with live music, games, food and if the river is running—a float down the wild and wonderful Watauga River. This week's river reptile:

The Bog Turtle: A Shy Little Guy

The bog turtle is the smallest turtle in North America. As a full grown adult, it maxes out at three to four inches!

They are easy to distinguish from other turtles, clad in a dark-brown shell with a distinctive red, orange or yellow blotchy marking on either side of its neck.



This reptile is no picky eater. Bog turtles are omnivorous, snacking on everything from worms, snails and beetles to berries and seeds.

Bog turtles prefer to live in wetland areas, such as wet meadows, fens and bogs. Occasionally, though, there are sightings of bog turtles roaming around in cattle pastures.

The bog turtle often lives about 20-30 years, but has been known to survive for over 50 years. You can tell how old a bog turtle is by counting its rings on its scute, a section of its shell. Each ring is a year, minus one ring that develops before the turtle is born.

Bog turtles are threatened by destruction of their habitats, particularly because of human development. An illegal trade that captures and sells them as pets is also a major threat to this species.

Keep a sharp eye out while you are enjoying your afternoon at the river, bog turtles are difficult to spot. They are rare and spend most of their time underwater, nestled in the mud or hiding in thick vegetation. They do like to lie out in sun and they are most often seen after periods of rainfall. So this week's rainy days might help out your chances at catching a glance of this elusive tiny turtle.

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