

Eastern Box turtles on Baldpate Mountain

Eight Eastern Box turtles were found by three observers on Baldpate Mountain during the summer of 2016, indicating a resident breeding population in the preserve.

Box Turtle #1 was found by Sharyn Magee on the north side of Baldpate on 5/19/16. The smooth shell indicated an older individual. The red eye indicated a male. A T&E report with GPS location was sent to NJ Fish and Wildlife since the Eastern Box turtle is a New Jersey species of special concern.



Box Turtle #2 was sighted by Sharyn Magee on 6/27/16 near the pond. This turtle had brown eyes indicating a female and a well-marked shell indicating a younger individual.

Box Turtles #3 and #4 were found by Fairfax Hutter, one in the powerline ROW and the other 50'-75' south of the ROW. In 2015 a box turtle was found by Fairfax Hutter in the proposed PennEast row. Since the home territory of the Eastern Box Turtle is 10 hectares or 25 acres and the average diameter of a circular home range is 1200', the home ranges of these turtles extend into the path of the proposed PennEast pipeline. The turtles were described as of a healthy breeding age.

Box Turtles #5, #6, #7, and #8 were found by Tyler Christensen during another study. All were mature individuals of undetermined sex.

The presence of eight turtles in one summer indicate a small but viable population of this state species of conservation concern. That two of these turtles were found in or adjacent to the powerline ROW shows that part of the population is in the path of the proposed PennEast pipeline.