

# WOOD TURTLE (*Glyptemys insculpta*)

## A Virginia Threatened Species



Note the sculptured scales of the top of shell (carapace).



Bottom view (plastron) of a male wood turtle. The concaved plastron is characteristic of a male. Note the distinct black markings and the brightly colored legs and tail.

Wood turtles, a state Threatened species, may be found in or near this project area. Wood turtles are medium-sized (6-9 inches adult shell length) semi-terrestrial turtles found in streams or in riparian uplands. The dull brown upper shell is very rough, and each section of the shell reflects growth rings that form an irregular pyramid. There is great variation in this trait, however, and the upper shell of older turtles may appear smooth. The bottom shell is yellow with black marginal blotches. Wood turtles have a black head, and dark brown extremities with characteristic yellow to burnt-orange skin patches on the neck and leg sockets. Wood turtles that are found in an instream construction area should be carefully relocated downstream to safety in suitable habitat (a run or deep pool with sandy or muddy bottom and submerged roots, branches, or logs). Wood turtles found within the project area uplands during construction should be relocated within the same watershed, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile downstream of their original location. It is a violation of Virginia law to harm or to possess a wood turtle. If you have any questions concerning wood turtles, please contact John Kleopfer of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (804-829-6703; John.Kleopfer@dgif.virginia.gov).

**THE WOOD TURTLE IS A PROTECTED SPECIES IN VIRGINIA: IT IS UNLAWFUL TO HARM, COLLECT, OR POSSESS THESE TURTLES.**