



Photos: Blanding's turtle release

cared for a total of nine turtles in her basement and has helped survey Middleton's Blanding's population. "It was a good experience. I really enjoyed it."

Currently, 17 eggs are incubating for future release.

The chances of a Blanding's turtle egg surviving if hatched in a nest is between 0 and 10 percent because of predators like dogs or raccoons, said Mary Linton, a certified ecologist and wetland biologist who is working on the project. Protecting the eggs by raising them in someone's basement really helps keep the population going while learning how to protect nests and increase the survival of hatchlings, she said.

Adult Blanding's turtles are easily recognized by their bright yellow chin and high-domed shell. Of Wisconsin's wetland turtles, the Blanding's spend more time on land — basking and moving to new wetlands — which means they face a high mortality rate on roads.

Last spring three Blanding's turtles with radio transmitters fitted to their shells also were released into the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. The transmitters allow biologists to track the turtles' movements, understand more about their habitat needs and learn how to keep them safe. Volunteers have now learned where the turtles feed all summer and where they overwinter.

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