

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Recommended Minimum Experience and Skills for Phase 2 Bog Turtle Surveyors

1. Ability to find bog turtles. Surveyor has independently found at least 20 bog turtles at 5 sites within the past 5 years using Phase 2 survey techniques. Bog turtles found dead (*e.g.*, dead-on-road), found live crossing roads, found using radio-telemetry equipment, or found in traps do not count toward this criterion. The term site refers to a discrete wetland occupied by bog turtles. *This level of field experience (i.e., 20 bog turtles found at 5 sites over the past 5 years) should be maintained at all times to ensure surveyor is maintaining search skills.*
2. Extent of field experience with bog turtles. At least two (2) field seasons¹ of conducting bog turtle survey work.
3. Written communication. Demonstrated ability to produce professional-quality, accurate, comprehensive, well-organized written documents, such as survey reports, master's thesis, or professional manuscripts. *Writing sample (e.g. Phase 1 or Phase 2 survey report) to be submitted as part of the agency review process.*
4. Experience in implementing bog turtle survey protocols.
 - Phase 1 – Within the past 5 years, surveyor has independently conducted at least ten Phase 1 surveys, accurately determining whether or not potential bog turtle habitat was present.²
 - Phase 2 – Within the past 5 years, surveyor has conducted at least five Phase 2 surveys in the capacity of principal investigator or ten Phase 2 surveys as an assistant.
5. Ethical Standards. Surveyors are expected to:
 - Have current permits to conduct surveys in Pennsylvania and other States where they are working.
 - Follow all provisions of State Scientific Collecting Permits.
 - Report bog turtle findings to the Service and PFBC within 48 hours.
 - Contact the Service and PFBC immediately (same day) if a bog turtle is killed or injured.
 - Follow established survey guidelines, and accurately, fully, and truthfully report on the methods used and results obtained during these surveys.
 - Maintain field notes documenting their work and provide copies of field notes upon request.
 - Maintain the confidentiality of bog turtle sites.
 - Obtain landowner permission before accessing land.
 - Conduct surveys and studies in a manner that ensures the safety of bog turtles.
 - Refrain from removing any turtles from their habitat (*i.e.*, wetland), holding them in captivity, collecting tissue or blood samples, PIT tagging, conducting radio-telemetry studies, or trapping unless specifically authorized by a Scientific Collecting Permit.

Failure to adhere to these ethical standards may result in an individual's removal from the list of qualified surveyors and revocation of their Scientific Collector's Permit.

¹ A field season is defined as at least 20 working days during the active season of the bog turtle (*i.e.*, April – September).

² Surveyor should be familiar with the characteristics of bog turtle habitat in the specific Recovery Unit(s) or geographic area(s) in which he/she will be working. Habitat can differ significantly between Recovery Units (*e.g.*, Prairie Peninsula/Lake Plain *vs.* Delaware *vs.* Outer Coastal Plain). Habitat can also differ significantly between geographic areas (*e.g.*, northern *vs.* southern New Jersey).