

# Redbelly Turtle

## Redbelly Turtle (*Pseudemys rubriventris*) - Pl.6

**Identification:** 10" - 15 3/4". While the Common Snapping Turtle is the largest turtle in our area, the Redbelly Turtle is the largest basking turtle in our area. The key identifying characteristics are the red-orange plastron, reddish markings on a dark carapace and cusps flanking the notch at the tip of the upper jaw. The carapace is low, not keeled (except in very young), oval and slightly wider towards the rear. Vertical reddish lines are typically found on the side scutes of the adult female whereas the male has a more mottled pattern. Many large adults, particularly in southern New Jersey, are highly melanistic, but even these may still show some faint reddish markings when wet. The hingeless, red-orange plastron is often marked with large gray blotches that fade with age. Whitish-yellow stripes are apparent on the head and neck of younger individuals.

**Where to find them:** Ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, ditches, and brackish marshes.

**When to find them:** Basking from March through October.

**Range:** All of the Southern Region. The Northern Region: Mercer, Monmouth, Somerset, and southern Middlesex Counties.

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(*Pseudemys rubriventris*) - text pg. 15



### Key Features

- Large turtle.
- Carapace: low, oval & not keeled; dark with faint reddish markings.
- Plastron: hingeless with distinct red-orange color.



New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife ~ 2003



Excerpt from: Schwartz, V. & D. Golden, "Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of New Jersey". New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife 2002.

Order the complete guide at - <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/products.htm>