Painted Turtle

APPEARANCE

- Dark upper shell (carapace) 3.5 to 7 inches in length and patterned with network of thin yellow lines
- Under shell (plastron) mostly red or orange-red with bold patterns of black and yellow.
- Black skin is patterned with bright yellow stripes on head, limbs, and tail

STATUS

- LEGAL to take with a valid Iowa fishing license.

RANGE IN IOWA

- Statewide

HABITAT

- Extremely versatile. Will live in almost any permanent body of water, like rivers, lakes, ponds, or marshes
- Prefers muddy bottoms and must have suitable basking sites so it can dry out and warm up

DIET

- Omnivorous diet of fish, worms, insects, tadpoles, frogs, crayfish, snails, carrion, and aquatic plants

FUN FACTS

- Favorite pastime is basking in the sun, even to the point where turtles will stack up on one another in a prime sunning spot
- Sleeps on the bottom of the wetland
- Cannot swallow on land; must find and eat its food in the water.
- Sex of painted turtles is determined by temperature: if it's hotter than 84°, most of the turtles will be female; if it's cooler, they'll probably be mostly male