

# EASTERN CHICKEN TURTLE

*Deirochelys reticularia*



**ID TIPS** Characterized by the netlike patterns on its carapace (top of shell) and its long neck with yellow stripes. Vertical stripes run down hind legs. Carapace pear-shaped ranging from olive to black. Plastron is hingeless and yellow/orange.

**HABITAT** Most common in shallow, still water with abundant vegetation including cypress ponds, Carolina bays, shallow ditches, borrow pits, and other shallow water areas that are surrounded by sandhills, pine flatwoods, or savannas.

**BREEDING** Females may lay more than one clutch during the year with clutch size varying between 5 and 14 eggs. Young may overwinter in the nests.

**FOOD** Tadpoles, crayfish, and aquatic insects.

## ACTIVITIES & STRATEGIES

Establish wetland buffers and connectivity between disjunct wetlands as chicken turtles are known to travel overland between aquatic habitats and use uplands for nesting and sometimes overwintering.

Maintain associated longleaf pine ecosystems with prescribed fire every 2-3 years and thin to keep the canopy open. If there is an isolated wetland in longleaf stand, thin around the edges.

## CONSERVATION STATUS

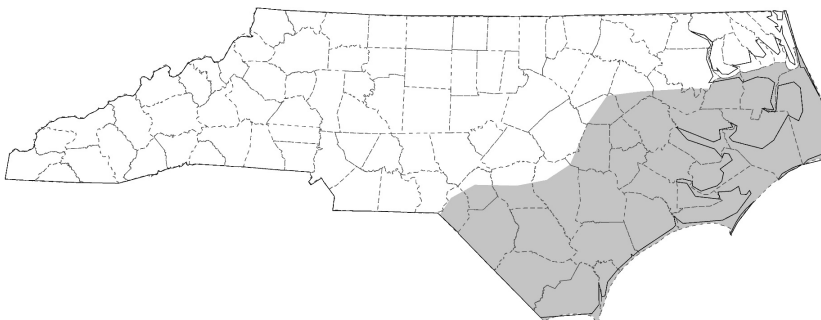
State special concern

## FOREST USE AT A GLANCE

Wetlands associated with the longleaf pine ecosystem

## SPECIES RANGE

NORTH CAROLINA DISTRIBUTION



SOUTHEAST



## DID YOU KNOW?

Chicken Turtles require both aquatic and terrestrial habitat for nesting and hibernation; sometimes these turtles overwinter terrestrially.