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Survey for the Eastern Musk Turtle (*Sternotherus odoratus*) in the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia

In this study, we aim to identify the range and abundance of *Sternotherus odoratus* (Common Musk Turtle) in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. Musk turtles have not previously been documented in the panhandle, making this the first dedicated project on the species in the region. We will trap *S. odoratus* and other freshwater turtle species at various suitable habitats throughout the panhandle. Collapsible mesh minnow traps will be set weekly for five to seven consecutive days and checked daily. Traps will be secured to rocks or logs with paracord and anchored by inserting a plastic pole through the mesh into the mud. Traps will be baited with cooked buffalo chicken pieces placed in perforated jars and rebaited weekly. Captured turtles will be processed on the shoreline, with data collection including measurements of morphology, sex, and weight. All turtles will be marked with unique notch codes and swabbed via cloaca and mouth for disease screening. Although full survey efforts have not yet commenced, trapping will be well underway and data analyzed before the WVAS Annual Meeting.