

# Turtle Tracking Team



*Basking male turtle.*

Expeditions in remote and rugged areas are common to members of the Turtle Team, a group of Wildlife Volunteers who are eager to “stick out their necks” for special status cold blooded critters. The Western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) is our only native California turtle. They have been declining due to a number of stressors including habitat degradation and loss, spread of exotic competitors, non-native predators, and epidemic disease. Female turtles are particularly helpless when the ambition to nest overshadows the need for protection and they hazard onto land, exposing themselves and their ivory-colored eggs to a host of hungry predators. For these reasons, the Western pond turtle is

listed as a California Species of Special Concern, meaning that increased management is necessary to keep them off the threatened or endangered lists.



*Female Western pond turtle being prepared for a transmitter.*



*Turtle with transmitters are returned to their pond by volunteers.*

The East Bay Regional Park District Stewardship Department, with the aid of the Regional Parks Foundation, is playing a leading role in wildlife conservation and research. We are embarking on a long-term effort to study, manage and implement habitat enhancement projects that will improve conditions for the Western pond turtle. There is a giant need for dedicated, passionate people to help these small creatures.