



PRESS RELEASE

# MassWildlife Releases 53 Endangered Turtles as Part of Successful Restoration Effort

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

6/01/2018

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Fish and Game

MEDIA CONTACT

---

**Katie Gronendyke**



Phone

617-626-1129



Online

[katie.gronendyke@state.ma.us](mailto:katie.gronendyke@state.ma.us)

**HANSON** — As part of the Baker-Polito Administration's efforts to restore endangered species in Massachusetts, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) officials, cooperating partners and

members of the public today participated in the release of 53 Northern Red-bellied Cooters, a turtle listed on both federal and state endangered species lists, at the Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area in Hanson.

Last fall, the cooter hatchlings were removed from the wild and paired with partnering educational and scientific facilities from across the state as part of MassWildlife's "headstarting" program. Raising the turtles in captivity for several months greatly accelerates growth and reduces the likelihood of death from predators during a turtle's first year of life.

2 boys releasing cooter Burrage Pond WMA Hanson by J Longsdorf-MassWildlife

*Photo Credit: Jennifer Longsdorf, MassWildlife*

As part of an overall turtle conservation effort, MassWildlife is working to raise awareness about turtles, explain the threats to native turtle populations, describe turtle conservation projects, and provide [information](#) on ways property owners, neighborhood residents, educators, and conservationists can help turtles in their communities. Before releasing the Northern Red-bellied Cooters, MassWildlife biologists spoke about how turtles are individually identified with implanted microchips for research purposes.

MassWildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program is responsible for the conservation and protection of the hundreds of species that are not hunted, fished, trapped, or commercially harvested in the state. The Program's highest priority is protecting the vertebrate and invertebrate animals and native plants listed on the [Massachusetts Endangered Species Act list](#). Conservation is achieved through biological field surveys and research, data management, endangered species regulations, habitat management, land protection, and education.


Representatives from the following organizations, schools, and colleges partnered with MassWildlife on the Cooter Headstart Program this year: Bristol County Agricultural High School, Dighton; Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster; Clinton High School; Dighton Middle School; Eagle Hill School, Hardwick; Essex Technical High School, Danvers; Gibbons Middle School, Westborough; Hingham Middle School; Holbrook High School; Mass Audubon Long Pasture, Barnstable; Minuteman Regional High School, Lexington; Museum of Science, Boston; National Marine Life Center, Bourne; New England Aquarium, Boston; Narragansett Regional High School, Templeton; Norwood High School; Plymouth Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs; Quincy High School; South Shore Science Center, Norwell; Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance, Plymouth, Southeastern Regional High School, Easton; Upper Cape Technical High School, Bourne; Watertown High School; Weymouth School; Worcester State University.

###

# Media Contact

**Katie Gronendyke**



 **Phone**

617-626-1129

 **Online**

[katie.gronendyke@state.ma.us](mailto:katie.gronendyke@state.ma.us)

## [Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs →](#)

EEA seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents. Through the stewardship of open space, protection of environmental resources, and enhancement of clean energy, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs works tirelessly to make Massachusetts a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

[More →](#)

---

## [Department of Fish and Game →](#)

The Department of Fish & Game works to preserve the state's natural resources and exercises responsibility over the Commonwealth's marine and freshwater fisheries, wildlife species, plants, and natural communities, as well as the habitats that support them.

[More →](#)