

Spiny Softshell Turtle



Nicknamed “leatherback” or “pancake turtle,” the Spiny Softshell Turtle is unlike most other turtles. Instead of a hard shell, these turtles lack the bony scutes

and have a flat, rubbery shell. Another distinguishing feature is their extended pig like snout. Combined with a long neck, this built in snorkel enables these turtles to spend most of their time buried in soft sand or silt while still being able to breath.

Well adapted for aquatic living, Spiny Softshell turtles rarely venture far from water. However, June and early July is nesting season and females head to higher ground to lay eggs. Nesting is usually a hurried process with digging, laying and covering all happening within an hour or less.

These turtles can be

observed basking on a log in CNC’s Wood Duck and Six-Island ponds, but are more often spotted along the banks of the Pine and Chippewa Rivers.



Northern Map Turtle

The Northern Map Turtle is another common river inhabitant. Like the Spiny Softshell, map turtles have



strong jaws to crush and eat snails, crayfish and freshwater mussels. Often seen basking along the rivers, look for their ridged shells and the detailed lines on their shells and face. These lines resemble the markings found on a topographical map, hence the name ‘map turtle.’ The Northern Map Turtle is often found at the confluence of the two rivers along CNC’s River Trail.