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Geographical range

Species of the Day: Western Swamp Turtle

The **Western Swamp Turtle**, *Pseudemydura umbrina*, is listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. This small freshwater turtle of an ancient and distinct family has a prominent spiny neck and its shell grows no larger than 15 cm in length. It inhabits the Perth region of Western Australia, where it persists in only two small seasonal marshes, with less than 100 animals surviving. It spends many months aestivating (the stopping or slowing of activity) during the hot dry summer, emerging for a few months to feed and reproduce during the wet season.

Most of the Western Swamp Turtle's original habitat has been lost to agriculture, housing, and mining. This species is also at high risk from global warming and increasing aridity impacting its seasonal wetlands.

Understanding the effects of extreme seasonal changes on the turtles' biology and behaviour proved to be the key to a successful captive breeding programme, which together with intensive protection of the remaining wetlands and re-introduction has averted near-certain extinction.

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