

Help support Project Terrapin by becoming a member of our terrapin team.

The Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES) of the Ocean County Vocational Technical School District is working along with scientists at Drexel University, PA & other supporters.

You can get involved by doing one or more of the following...

- Providing volunteer research time on the project in the field
- Assisting with obtaining donations of materials and supplies
- Helping to conduct surveys and education

Check out our website at projectterrapin.org



[Projectterrapin/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ProjectTerrapin/)

You could directly contact us via e-mail at ProjectTerrapin@gmail.com

The following are supporters of terrapin research, education and conservation at Barnegat Bay, New Jersey:



Help Us to Learn More About Northern Diamondback Terrapins at Barnegat Bay

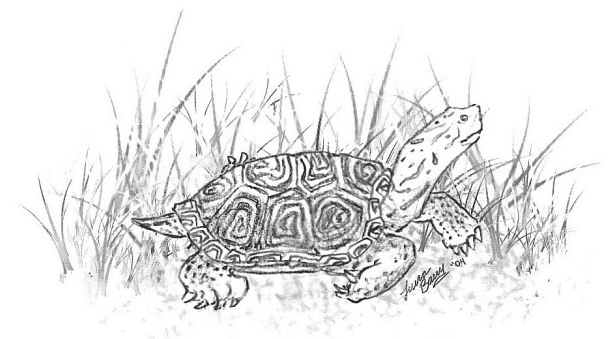
The goal is to find out more about diamondback terrapin ecology, life history and conservation methods. Education is an integral part of the program. Teachers, students and volunteers participate in working with us in meeting these goals. Project terrapin includes the following research objectives in conjunction with scientists at Drexel University, PA:

- Mark and recapture of terrapins.
- Study nesting terrapins and their habitats.
- Measure nest conditions like temperature, moisture and soil type.
- Educate others about the biology, life history and conservation of terrapins.
- Promote the conservation of terrapins using current scientific information through research.
- Support the Diamondback Terrapin Working Group (DTWG).



Project Terrapin

LEARNING MORE THROUGH RESEARCH



Project Terrapin is a research and education initiative of the Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES), New Jersey focusing on diamondback terrapins at Barnegat Bay, New Jersey.

Drawing by Laura Barry, class of '08 of the Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science, NJ

Northern Diamondback Terrapins...an overview

Terrapins are a turtle found in estuaries, bays, lagoons, and creeks along the East and Gulf Coasts of the United States. There are seven subspecies of terrapins throughout their range. The subspecies in our area, the Northern Diamondback Terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin terrapin*), is within the northern-most part of the range.



Terrapins feed in marsh systems on invertebrates and small fish. Their diets consist of snails, shrimp, crabs, worms, and mussels.

Adult females grow larger than males, becoming mature in 6 to 8 years. Males mature in 3 to 5 years. Females dig nests on barrier island bay beaches and small dredge islands. Females deposit clutches of eggs (between 4 and 20) which incubate approximately 60 to 90 days. Hatchlings emerge in late summer and average only 5 grams. Sometimes hatchlings remain in the nest throughout the winter (called overwintering).

Threats to Terrapins

- During the late 1800's and early 1900's, terrapins were harvested as a food source throughout their range. This harvesting trend declined after the 1930's.
- Commercial-style crab pots kill thousands of terrapins annually across their range. Terrapins that are able to access the pots cannot escape, thus drown. Many pots become lost when they break from their mooring and become abandoned (called "ghost traps").
- Sometimes motor boats can directly impact terrapins causing mortality by cutting terrapins with their propellers.
- Another source of mortality is by highway traffic. Nesting female terrapins trying to cross roadways sometimes get run over. The Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor, NJ has an egg retrieval and hatch program. Eggs are taken from the dead or injured females and incubated to hatch. Then, hatchlings are raised and released.



- Overdevelopment causes both destruction and fragmentation of terrapin habitat that can decrease populations.

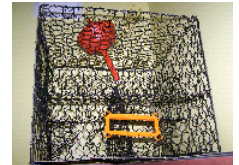


Things you can do...

Terrapins are considered a species of special concern in New Jersey. Little is known about their population.

You can help by acting or spreading the word....

- Avoid using boats and/or personal water craft around marsh systems and in submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) beds.
- If using commercial-style crab pots, **USE BYCATCH REDUCTION DEVICES (turtle excluders)**. Contact MATES Project Terrapin to acquire them.
- If driving on roadways adjacent to marsh areas during the months of May, June or July, **DRIVE SLOWLY**. Adult female terrapins may be coming up to nest.



- Do not take terrapins from the wild. In New Jersey, it is illegal to take turtles from the wild or to release them.
- Do not support the "on-line" turtle industry. They may be a source of future depletion of species and are very hard to provide care!

For more information on terrapins:

MATES Project Terrapin at
Projectterrapin.org
Wetlands Institute at terrapinconservation.org
Diamondback Terrapin Working Group at dtwg.org