



photo by: Brian Tang

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

"Be Terrapin Aware!" Slow down while driving in areas that traverse coastal saltmarshes and look out for terrapins.

Report sightings of road-kill or live individuals to the Endangered & Nongame Species Program (ENSP) by completing and submitting a "Sighting Report Form" with a map of the animal's location. For more information visit our website. This information will assist biologists in identifying critical habitat for the species as well as potential road-kill "hot spots".

Support our work by making a tax deductible donation. Visit our website for more information.

www.conservewildlifenj.org



photo by: Jim Gilbert



CONSERVE WILDLIFE
FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

Be Terrapin Aware

Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting New Jersey's rare wildlife. We carry out research projects, develop management plans, encourage conservation practices and educate residents of our state about the wildlife living on their doorstep.

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**Keeping New Jersey's Wildlife
in Our Future**



photo by: Jonathan Carlucci

If you find a terrapin crossing the road use these steps to help it cross safely.

- Stay safe. Do not put yourself at risk. Make sure that you do not endanger yourself, or others, by walking into traffic.
- When safe to do so, pull your car over onto the shoulder. Turn on your hazard signals.
- When safe to enter the roadway, approach the turtle and pick it up by grabbing its shell with both hands between its front and hind legs. HOLD ON - terrapins have strong legs.
- It is important that you move the turtle in the direction that it is heading. They are not always headed directly towards water. They will turn around if you put them in the wrong direction so work with their instincts.
- Place the terrapin off the road onto the soft shoulder (dirt or grass).
- Give yourself a pat on the back for helping an animal cross the road!
- Always use extreme caution when trying to help a terrapin!

Important Tips

- DO NOT remove a terrapin from its natural habitat or where you found it. Violators will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. N.J.A.C. 7:25-21
- DO NOT pick up a terrapin by its tail, head or legs. You could injure them!

NEW JERSEY TERRAPIN PROJECT

Helping terrapins through management and education

The goal of the Terrapin Project is to help reduce the amount of diamondback terrapin road-kills, to more accurately map their range, and to educate the public about their threats in the environment.

Info about Terrapins

The Northern diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) is a medium-sized turtle. Females are larger than males. Terrapins have a light brown, gray and black carapace (top of shell) and a lighter plastron (bottom of shell), which is a greenish-yellow. The skin is light to dark gray with black spots and other dark markings. Both sexes have a light-colored upper jaw. They are named for their diamond shaped pattern on their carapace.



Threats to Terrapins

Northern diamondback terrapins face a variety of threats that jeopardize their survival. Habitat loss, drowning in "ghost" crab traps, boat prop collisions, and impacts from motor vehicles all kill thousands of terrapins each year.

Each summer, from May through July, egg-bearing females leave the protection of their habitat (brackish water) in search of suitable nest sites. While in search of these nesting grounds, females often cross roads or nest along the sides of roads.



Many adult female terrapins are injured or killed by motor vehicles and people unaware of the summer nesting habits of the terrapin. Over time, high mortality rates of female terrapins can substantially reduce the local population.

Why do terrapins cross the road?

Terrapins require specific areas where they can lay their eggs. They search for high areas with sand and gravel above the high tide line.

Road shoulders are ideal terrapin nesting areas. Many terrapins must navigate busy roads to lay their eggs. This leads to the death of thousands of egg-bearing females every year.

Our Plan

- Install short "drift style" fences along the sides of the road. These fences will prevent terrapins from entering the roadway. These fences will remain in place throughout the nesting season. If you see a damaged fence, please contact us immediately.
- Install more "Terrapin Crossing" signs along the road.
- Enhance natural nesting habitat for terrapins.
- Collect terrapin observations to identify potential road-kill "hot spots."
- Educate the public about terrapins and their threats.