

# 2019 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one)      2019 1<sup>st</sup>      2019 2<sup>nd</sup>      2019 3<sup>rd</sup>      2019 4<sup>th</sup>

Grant Program, Number and Title: GSA 00046 / **Eastern Box Turtle Status Assessment, Conservation Plan, and BMPs.**

Organization: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation

Project Leader: Lori Erb and Brandon Ruhe

Abstract: Please provide a short (1-2 paragraphs) abstract that addresses EACH of the following: the objectives of your project, accomplishments to date, future plans and timelines with an estimate for when the project will be completed.

The objective of the Eastern Box Turtle (EBT) project is to develop a status assessment and conservation plan for the Eastern Box Turtle to advance conservation efforts for this species. Accomplishments during this quarter includes the completion of three conference calls with the Eastern Box Turtle Steering Committee (EBT SC), pollinator RNC project coordinator, state wildlife biologists, and others to advance project tasks. We developed a sampling design framework for the population monitoring, made revisions to the protocol, continue to collect EO data from the states, drafted data forms to collect EBT treatment data from wildlife rehabilitation centers, and began planning for the 2020 field season.

During the next quarter, we plan to hold monthly calls, continue to collect Eastern Box Turtle observation data from state data sources, development of the regional database, begin to develop the Species Distribution Model (SDM), assist states and volunteer surveyors with field season planning and trainings, collaboration with the pollinator RNC group, compiling historic data on prescribed fires and wildfires, and assist with development and implementation of dog-assisted survey protocol.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes

Progress Achieved: (For each Goal/Objective, list Planned and Actual Accomplishments)

- Organized and lead 3 monthly conference calls with the EBT RNC Steering Committee and drafted meeting notes.
- Conducted a call with the Pollinator RCN project coordinator about potential collaboration, particularly at monitoring sites.
- Conducted a call with dog trainers and EBT RNC Steering Committee members to get advice for the development of methods for dog-assisted EBT surveys.
- Developed a framework for the population monitoring sampling design, by identifying minimum targets for number of sites per physiographic province within each state.
- Made revisions to the population monitoring protocol and distributed the updated version to the Steering Committee.
- Obtained EBT observation data from DE DFW.
- Planning for an expert surveyor meeting in the Mid-Atlantic region.
- Drafted a data form and data entry worksheet to be completed by wildlife rehabilitation facilities, to collect data on road related injuries and mortalities of EBT across the northeast.

- Obtained location information on turtle races in the northeast US.
- Drafted the quarterly report.

Difficulties Encountered: None.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Hold monthly conference calls with the EBT SC.
- Continue to collect and/or organize EBT observation data from state data sources.
- Continue development of the EBT regional database.
- Begin to develop the SDM.
- Provide trainings to volunteer surveyors as needed
- Work with volunteers and states to prepare for spring surveys
- Collaborate with the pollinator group to plan pre- and post-burn EBT surveys
- Interview burn bosses and state ecologists
- Continue development of a provisional protocol for dog-assisted surveys and help coordinate implementation

Expected End Date: The end date of the next quarter is March 31, 2020

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$17,646.25

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$68,499.72

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes

Signature:

Date: 2/4/2020