

2022 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one) 2022 1st 2022 2nd 2022 3rd 2022 4th

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 addressing 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 EBT to advance conservation efforts for this species. Accomplishments during this quarter includes conducting three conference calls with the Eastern Box Turtle Steering Committee (EBT SC), corresponding with the grant Co-PI on grant tasks, corresponding with volunteer surveyors to provide guidance, hired two subcontractors, hired a part-time seasonal assistant, planned and conducted surveys in several mid-Atlantic states, and administrative actions (e.g., overseeing subcontractor's work, backing up files, timesheets, drafting reports).

During the next quarter, we plan to hold monthly calls, collaborate with the grant Co-PI, enter survey data, compile, and perform quality control on survey data from surveyors through the northeast, begin to draft BMPs and a status assessment, and perform administrative duties.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes

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

- Coordinated and led three project steering committee meetings.
- Drafted meeting notes from our monthly steering committee meetings.
- Conducted several meetings with the project co-PI, Patrick Roberts.
- Planned and prepared for numerous meetings with project partners.
- Contacted landowners for permission to do surveys.
- Applied for permits to conduct surveys in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.
- Conducted interview and hired two subcontractors, for additional survey work throughout the northeast.
- Drafted and sent regret letters to applicants not hired.
- Drafted two subcontracts for the additional survey work.
- Coordinated with subcontractors to perform survey work in MA, CT, RI, NY, WV, and VA
 - Assisted them with obtaining state permits, coordinating with state leads, coordinate genetic sampling, etc.
- Searched for and hired a part-time MACHAC seasonal assistant.
- Coordinated with the group about genetic and microbiome sampling.
- Provided support and guidance to volunteer surveyors in PA and MD (e.g., with site selection, survey planning, permitting, surveys, data entry).
- Organized data and project files.

- Requested and compiled monitoring data collected in 2022 from state leads and volunteers across all the northeastern states.
- Planned for surveys in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.
 - Consulted with data sets and landowners/managers to selected survey sites.
 - Mapped survey plots at each site.
 - Obtain landowner permission and appropriate permits (where applicable).
- Conducted 3 surveys of 136 plots at 10 sites in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.
 - 2- PA, 4-NJ, and 4-MD sites.
- Subcontractors completed population monitoring surveys in various states
 - MA – completed 3 surveys of 24 plots at 2 sites. No turtles were observed.
 - NY – completed 3 surveys of 16 plots at 4 sites. 11 turtles were captured and processed.
 - RI – completed 3 surveys of 24 plots at 2 sites. 8 turtles were captured and processed.
 - WV – completed 3 surveys of 24 plots at 6 sites. 9 turtles were captured and processed.
 - VA – completed 3 surveys of 24 plots at 6 sites. No turtles were observed.
- Drafted an interim quarterly report.

Difficulties Encountered: None.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Hold monthly conference calls with the EBT SC
- Enter and perform quality control on the 2022 field season data collected by MACHAC.
- Coordinate with one subcontractor to perform data analysis.
- Continue to review and summarize information and literature on prescribed fire and eastern box turtles.
- Begin drafting BMPs for eastern box turtles.
- Continue to coordinate with my Co-PI on the development of a SDM, site mapping guidelines, CANs, and development of BMPs.
- Continue to coordinate with the pollinator group and habitat technical committee.
- Begin drafting a status assessment.
- Organize and back up files.
- Complete a quarterly report.

Expected End Date: The end date of the next quarter is September 30, 2022

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$85,886.00

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$108,499.72 (excluding \$50,000 genetics project)

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes

Signature: *Brandon M. Rule*

Date: 09/28/2022