

2020 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one) 2020 1st 2020 2nd 2020 3rd 2020 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 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), evaluating a tracking app recently developed, coordinating and training surveyors throughout the northeast to perform population monitoring surveys, conducting population monitoring surveys in MD and PA, and coordinating the states to collect genetic samples.

During the next quarter, we plan to hold monthly calls, continue the development of a regional database, assist surveyors with post field season needs, hold a meeting with surveyors to obtain feedback on the protocol, enter the MACHAC survey data, compile and clean the 2020 field season data from all the states, and continue to compile historical data and literature on prescribed fires and its potential effects on box turtles and their habitat.

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 RCN Steering Committee and drafted meeting notes.
- Worked with Antioch GIS lab to inform final revisions in the development of a spatial tracking app to be used by surveyors during EBT surveys.
- Evaluated the tracking app during surveys.
- Prepared, submitted, and followed up on permit applications to conduct surveys in MD and PA.
- Revised the field forms, protocol, and website.
- Coordinated surveyors in MD, PA, DE, NJ, WV, and DC for population monitoring surveys, by answering questions, providing sites codes, marking turtles, sending updates and reminders, etc.
- Coordinated with state leads to collect genetic samples throughout the northeast.
- Performed population monitoring surveys in PA and MD. These included 2 surveys at 1 PA sites with two turtles captures and 11 surveys at 3 sites in MD with 32 turtle capture events.
- Provided guidance to University of Delaware students for the development of a brochure to encourage landowners to improve wildlife habitat on their property.
- Organized and backed-up files.
- Drafted a quarterly report.

Difficulties Encountered: None.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Hold monthly conference calls with the EBT SC.
- Continue development of the EBT regional database.
- Work with Antioch GIS lab to transfer the survey tracking app and associated data to the MACHAC ESRI account.
- Continue to provide assistance to the Univ. of Delaware students to develop a landowner brochure.
- Provide assistance to surveyors as needed as they enter and submit their survey data.
- Hold a webinar with the 2020 surveyors to get feedback on use of the population monitoring protocol.
- Organize and enter the MACHAC survey data.
- Compile and clean the 2020 field season survey data from all states.
- Continue to collect historical information and literature on prescribed fire and develop an outline for prescribed fire BMP in box turtle habitat.
- Organize and back up files.
- Complete a quarterly report.

Expected End Date: The end date of the next quarter is June 30, 2020

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$32,043.22

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$68,499.72

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes

Signature:

Date: 08/30/2020