

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 2 monthly conference calls with the Eastern Box Turtle (EBT) RNC Steering Committee and drafted meeting notes.
- Organized and lead 2 post-field season surveyors meetings to get feedback on use of the protocol and any issues that they ran into.
- Organized and participated in a meeting with Elizabeth Crisfield, lead of the pollinator RNC group, to discuss the xeric habitat BMP.
- Communicated with Julian Avery about the potential to collaborate on a project to assess sexual dimorphism and shell pattern and how they relate to environmental variables.
- Coordinating with JJ and the EBT SC on collecting genetic samples for JJs study funded by TSA.
- Collaborated with JJ Apodaca to draft a genetic project proposal, an extension of range wide genetic analysis for the EBT.
- Collected recent literature related to fire and the EBT.
- Set up a Collector license with ESRI and migrated the tracking app to the MACHAC ESRI account.
- Reviewed and commented on a list of potential data layers for the SDM.
- Assisted with drafting a regulatory review spreadsheet to send to the state leads for review and updating.
- Assisted surveyors with questions.

- Organized and back up files.
- Drafted a quarterly report.

Difficulties Encountered: None.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Hold monthly conference calls with the EBT SC.
- Continue development and organize the EBT regional database.
- Provide assistance to surveyors as needed as they enter and submit their survey data and prepare for the 2021 survey season.
- 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.
- Continue to collaborate with the pollinator RNC grant lead in the development of a draft xerica habitat BMP document.
- Organize and back up files.
- Complete a quarterly report.

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

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$35,244.68

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$68,499.72

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes

Signature:

Date: 11/18/2020