

2020 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one) 2020 1st 2020 2nd **2020 3rd** 2020 4th

Grant Program, Number and Title: RCN, GSA 00047; Eastern Box Turtle Status Assessment, Conservation Plan, and Best Management Practices.

Organization: H. Patrick Roberts (Independent Contractor)

Project Leader: H. Patrick Roberts

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 this project is to develop a status assessment and conservation plan for the Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) in the northeastern United States. This contract with the Wildlife Management Institute was executed at the very end of the first quarter of 2019. As a result of this delayed start, the timeline for the initial objectives of this project was shifted forward accordingly.

During the third quarter of 2020, Lori Erb (of MACHAC) and I held monthly Steering Committee calls in July, August, and September (in conjunction with volunteer survey calls) to discuss progress toward the overarching goals and objectives of the project. We continued to make adjustments to the monitoring and management-related protocols, which are available to the public at northeastturtles.org. We held two calls with volunteers throughout the region to receive feedback about the population monitoring protocol and discuss potential areas for improvement. We requested and compiled all regulatory information related to eastern box turtles from lead state agency biologists throughout the region, which will be included in the status assessment and conservation plan. Preliminary species distribution models were developed for USFWS Region 5. Last, we conducted a review of existing status assessments of similar taxa and developed an outline for the status assessment and conservation plan.

Immediate next steps will be to (1) continue to collect and collate 2020 sampling data, (2) refine species distribution models (e.g. potentially develop state-specific models to improve performance), (3) make progress on public communications materials, (4) begin to develop a standardized population mapping protocol, and (5) continue to hold monthly conference calls. We expect to complete this project by February 2023.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes.

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

Planned and accomplished:

- Monthly conference calls
- Gathered regional data layers for use in future modeling for this project
- Developed species distribution models
- Reviewed existing status assessments
- Collected eastern box turtle regulation information from state agencies in Northeast

Difficulties Encountered: N/A

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Continue to hold monthly conference calls
- Collect data from remaining sources
- Continue to refine species distribution models
- Continue to develop public communications materials
- Begin development of regional population mapping protocol

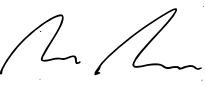
Expected End Date: February 28, 2023.

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$46,102.92 (including match)

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$68,500

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes.

Signature: 

Date: 10/30/2020