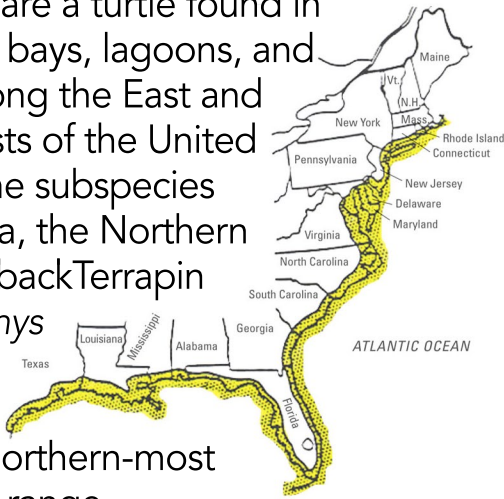


# Northern Diamondback Terrapins: An Overview

Terrapins are a turtle found in estuaries, bays, lagoons, and creeks along the East and Gulf Coasts of the United States. The subspecies in our area, the Northern Diamondback Terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*), is at the northern-most part of its range.



Their diets consist of invertebrates, vegetation, and small fish. Adult females grow larger than males, becoming mature in 6 to 9 years. Males mature in 3 to 5 years.



Females dig nests on bay beaches. Females deposit clutches of eggs (between 4 and 20) which incubate approximately 60 to 90 days. Hatchlings emerge in late summer and are only the size of a quarter. Sometimes hatchlings remain in the nest through the winter (called overwintering).

# Threats to Terrapins

Terrapins are not a game species in New Jersey since July 2016

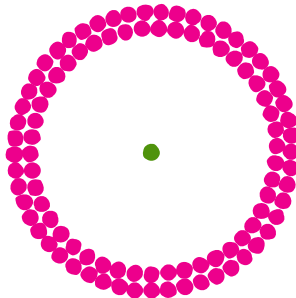
During the late 1800's and early 1900's, terrapins were harvested as a food source throughout their range. This harvesting trend declined after the 1930's. Terrapins are still being illegally taken from the wild and sold.



Commercial-style crab pots kill thousands of terrapins annually across their range. Terrapins that are able to access the pots cannot escape, thus drown.



Sometimes motor boats can cause mortality by injuring terrapins with their propellers. Another source of mortality is by highway traffic. Nesting female terrapins trying to cross roadways sometimes get run over. Overdevelopment causes both destruction and fragmentation of terrapin habitat that can decrease populations.



Only 1 in 100 Baby Terrapins Survive to Adulthood

# What You Can Do

1. Be careful if boating and/or using personal water craft around marsh systems and try to avoid submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) beds.
2. If using commercial-style crab pots, **USE BYCATCH REDUCTION DEVICES** (turtle excluders). Contact **MATES Project Terrapin** to acquire them.



3. If driving on roadways adjacent to marsh areas during the months of May, June or July, **DRIVE SLOWLY**. Adult female terrapins may be coming up to nest.
4. Do not take terrapins from the wild. In New Jersey, there are regulations preventing turtle capture.
5. Do not support the "online" turtle industry. Hatchling sellers may be a source of future depletion of species and are very hard to provide care!
6. If you live in an area with terrapins, consider a "turtle garden."