



What Does a Terrapin Turtle Tracker Do?



#1.

Look for signs of nesting activity

Depredated Nests

Unprotected nests are often destroyed by predators.



Eaten by
raccoon



Test Holes

Terrapin females often try many spots before they find one that is just right.



Eaten by
fox



#2.

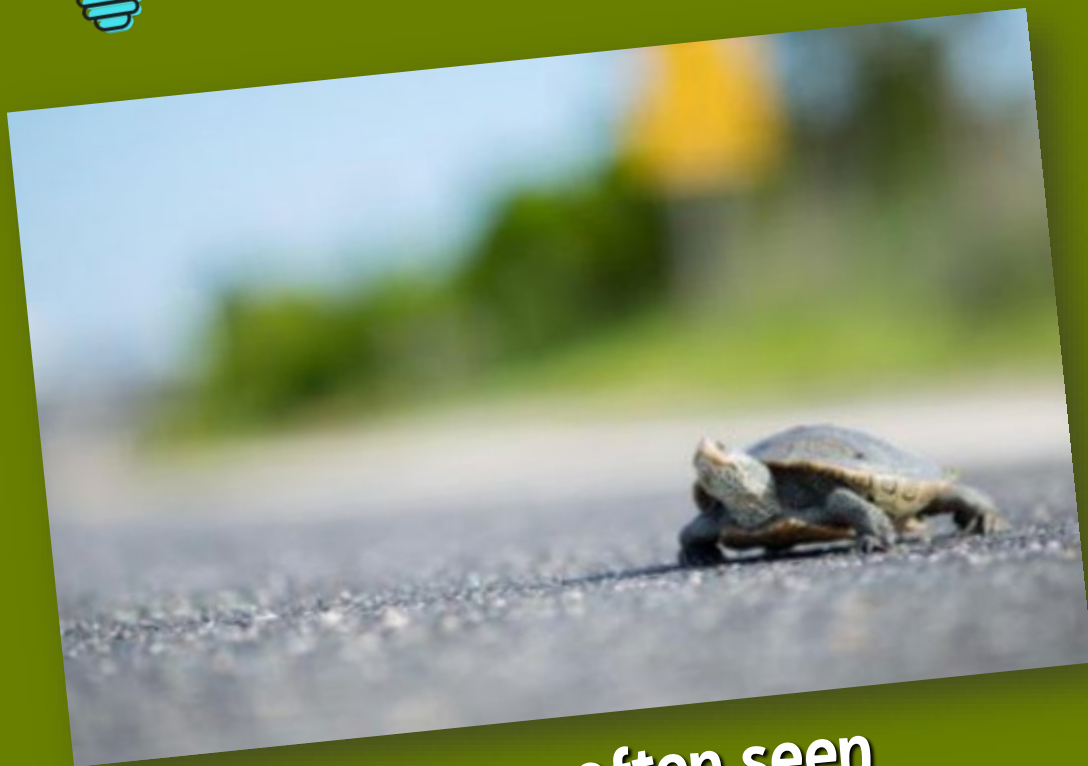
Search for Diamondback Turtles



They are often hard to spot when they are nesting.



Turtles move more quickly than you'd expect.



They are often seen crossing the road.

- **Observe** from a distance
- In the brush, it is **difficult to spot** them nesting, so enter these areas very carefully
- If they are resting or have finished nesting, **take a photo** – without disturbing her
- **Report the location** using the turtle shaped numbers on the edge of the road or GPS

If a turtle is found, the team will..

Record measurements, location, markings, notches, tag number



Measure with a caliper

Date: 9/24 Time: 9:15 Previously noted? Yes/No NOTCH CODE: RM Old/new
Photo: y/n Share or send to: 631-767-6287 or e-mail to: myrtle@floridapondfriends.org
What she was doing when first seen? Walking/crossing road, resting, nesting or _____ Minutes
Did she nest? Yes/No (if yes, fill in location details (lower box) How long did it take? _____ Minutes
Captured or Observed (circle one) Map Location / Turtle Numbers _____ other landmarks _____
Way Point/GPS- Latitude / Longitude _____ Plastron Length 12.8 Recapture? Yes/No (this year)
Carapace- Length X Width 13.5 x 11.7 Plastron: Plain, Red Map, Fun, Gray
Skin color: Light, dark gray, almost black Markings: Freckles, Stripes, Swirls, Plain Plastron: Plain, Red Map, Fun, Gray
Weight/Mass (g) 15.70 Head Pattern (Diamond) Y/N, Solid, Swirly or freckles LIPS White, Lipstick, Dark
Abnormalities- scars- Yes/No, odd pattern, deformities. (mark on diagram) Peeling Yes/No Number of Test holes: _____
Temp of nest? _____ Temp of Test Holes? _____ Who recorded data? Chris
Who collected turtle? Patricia
Lake eyes
No Lipstick
Pretty thin pattern
Cross black markings
Smile
Nesting: _____
Did she appear to be disturbed by people at any time? _____ Number of test holes you saw: _____
Where did you first see her? _____ Time ended if you saw her finish: _____



Various head patterns



Weigh using a bag and scale



Shell marking (i.e., notches, patterns, peeling, scars)



If the turtle nests, the team will **PROTECT** the nest

- Remove layers of soil until eggs are found
- Check for roots and insects
- Place small cover over eggs
- Add another layer of soil and a 2' x 2' piece of netting and secure with tent stakes in corners
- Take nest temperature
- Cover to original level
- Record nest location using GPS photo and describe how to find it just in case GPS is not available.



The Nesting Process



Step #1: Usually looks around putting nose in the air and might throw some sand in the air



Step #2: If she likes the spot she'll turn around and start digging with her rear legs



Step #3: Once hole is deep enough, she makes a side chamber and starts laying the eggs



Step #4: When finished, she covers the nest so completely, you can't find it

Diamondback Terrapin Turtles come in all sizes

Full grown males
are $\frac{1}{3}$ the size
of females



A hatchling, a
one-year old
and an adult

