4th Project Leaders Workshop Goals

- Connect with each other and share experiences
- Train New Leaders
- Project Review
- Skills refresher
- Updates
THE BOX TURTLE CONNECTION
PROJECT LEADERS WORKSHOP

APRIL 9, 2013
Ann Berry Somers, UNC Greensboro, Biology Department

A Project of
The Box Turtle Collaborative
Eastern Box Turtle
*Terrapene carolina*

Western Box Turtle
*Terrapene ornata*

by J.D. Willson
“A land Tort which the Savages esteem above all other Torts.”

John White, circa 1587
Status of Box Turtles

North Carolina

- not considered Endangered or Threatened
- a priority species in the NC Wildlife Action Plan
- “should be monitored to avoid continued population decline”

IUCN

Vulnerable – likely to become Endangered unless the circumstances threatening its survival and reproduction improve

CITES

Appendix II - export permits are needed from the country of origin
In God we trust. All others must bring data.

~ W. Edwards Deming
Gather data on populations

Educate and engage citizens in scientific data collection
The Box Turtle Connection

Three Threads

• Educational
• Citizen Science
• Long-term Study

Fritz Geller-Grimm
Welcome to The Box Turtle Connection!

Thank you for your interest in box turtle research in North Carolina. Our project, The Box Turtle Connection, is an initiative of The Box Turtle Collaborative. This website is intended to provide information to the public about the project and to enlist the help of citizens in providing information to scientists about box turtles in the Carolinas.

Home Page

The Box Turtle Collaborative

How You Can Help

Project Leaders Home Page

Contacts
The Box Turtle Connection

Educational Thread

Presence at public events celebrating R&A

FREE Materials for distribution
DVD: Gems of the Forest
Box Turtle Postcard
Book: The Box Turtle Connection
(free download)
Research and Education Guide
(now in revision)
The Box Turtle Connection

Don’t Take Me Away From My Own Home
Let Box Turtles Stay Wild!

Box Turtles Are in Trouble
Eastern Box Turtles (Terrapene carolina carolina) are North Carolina’s state reptile. Their numbers are dwindling, in part because people move them to a new place or take them home as pets. It may be just one here or there, but the result is thousands of box turtles disappearing from their forest and field homes, forever.

They Need to Stay Wild
As far as nature is concerned, a turtle taken from the wild is “dead.” It can no longer help maintain the population. “Saving” or “helping” a turtle by bringing it home or moving it to a new location in fact hurts fragile turtle populations. Moved from its home in the wild, a box turtle may sicken and die and pose a health threat to recipient populations. Turtles released into unfamiliar surroundings (sometimes called relocation) are often killed by predators or crushed by cars as they attempt to return to their original wild homes.

Turtles on the Road
If you see a turtle crossing the road, move it to the side that it is headed towards. Resist the urge to drive it to a “safer” place. Remember - that turtle may have been living there for decades, already knows where to find food and mates, and has a special place to hibernate or lay eggs. Watch out for vehicles when helping turtles. Don’t take risks with your own life!

Help Wild Box Turtles
Adults and children can help wild box turtles. Report your turtle observations and other reptiles and amphibians to the Carolina Herp Atlas: www.carolinaherpatlas.org

Above: Female Eastern Box Turtle by Gil Grant
Cover Photo: Male Eastern Box Turtle by J.D. Willison

Original version of postcard by Chuck Landry
The Box Turtle Connection

Three Threads

- Educational
- Citizen Science
- Long-term Study

Fritz Geller-Grimm
Carolina Herp Atlas
www.carolinaherpatlas.org

- Layperson contributes observations
- No minimum or maximum number (no commitment required)
- Individuals register one time
- For each record submitted
  - species, date, time of day, location
  - comment (if desired)
  - photo may be attached
Carolina Herp Atlas

Launched 2006

2006 - present

Records: 20,553
Species: 154
Photos: 5,322
Users: 1,332

Terrapene carolina = 1530
The Box Turtle Connection

Three Threads

- Educational
- Citizen Science
- Long-term Study

Fritz Geller-Grimm
“Long term studies are expensive, daunting, and exhausting (and take a long time).”

Justin Congdon
Freshwater Turtle and Terrapin Meeting
Baltimore, Maryland   Feb. 2, 2013
How to mark:

- Marks are made by filing a small V-shaped notch in the marginal scutes on the turtle's carapace (top shell).
Training Resources

How-to manual,
free download

http://www.uncg.edu/bio/faculty/Ann_Somers/lab/BoxTurtleBook.pdf
PAWS (Portal Access Wildlife System)

Password protected
<table>
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<th>Camp Chestnut Ridge</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Umstead State Park</td>
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<td>Lake Raleigh Woods</td>
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**Adding today:**
Greensboro Natural Science Center
NC Arboretum
Medoc Mt. State Park
Goose Creek State Park
Mayo River State Park

**WELCOME!**
Long-term Study Thread

~ 44 trained Project Leaders
28 sites submitting data annually,
How many added today?
BTC Site Ownership
Total = 28

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<th>Count</th>
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<td>State</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit</td>
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<td>For-profit</td>
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<td>Residence</td>
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19 Public
9 Private
Turtles encountered opportunistically or with canine assistants
Turtle Detection Method

- Active search: 12%
- Incidental: 74%
- Dog: 12%
- Other: 2%
Outcomes to Date

- 2,150 entries from 33 sites
- ~ 1,700 unique, 440 recaptures
- 8,195 volunteer hrs. submitted by PLs available for State Wildlife Grants match

Wow, that’s AMAZING!
Outcomes to Date (cont.)

- All Project Leaders have science backgrounds
- 90% are collecting data on the job
- Apparent increase in job satisfaction
- Requests for new PL positions annually
Project Productivity

Carolina Herp Atlas – 6 yrs

1,530 records (NC & SC)

Long Term Study – 5 yrs.

2,150 NC records

turtles measured & permanently marked
Strengths

- PLs enter data online
- Very inexpensive
- Minimal time demands once project is underway
- Taps into existing efforts
- PLs collect data on the job
- Network overseeing BTC have worked together for years (some since 1978)

Dean Alessandrini
Challenges

- Project may grow too fast
- Time needed to develop website and answer emails