

Island ecology of diamondback terrapins



Project Objectives

To research the biology and ecology of Bermuda's native diamondback terrapins in order to promote legislative protection and effective management.

Photos courtesy of Mark Outerbridge

One of only two naturally occurring terrestrial reptiles now living on Bermuda and the only known breeding population outside of its North American range.

Summary

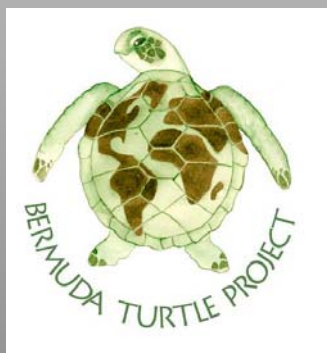
The **Diamondback Terrapin** (*Malaclemys terrapin*) is native to Bermuda and has been listed as a globally near threatened species by the International Union for Conservation of Natural Resources (IUCN). The entire Bermuda population can only be found in three land-locked, brackish water ponds at the east end of the Island. Virtually nothing is known about the biology and ecology of these pond turtles in Bermuda, thus the **Diamondback Terrapin Project** was initiated in 2007 in response to the need to fill this enormous gap in our knowledge of this species.

The Project's main goals are to understand their island-adapted biology and ecology to see how it compares to those populations living along the eastern seaboard of America, as well as to understand how these turtles are using their environment.

Multiple assessments of the population between 2008 and 2010 have revealed that less than 100 adults are present in Bermuda, indicating that these **Diamondback Terrapins** should be considered extremely vulnerable to local extinction.

There are no conservation measures currently in place for Bermuda's **Diamondback Terrapins**. The recent discovery that these terrapins are native to Bermuda was a critical step towards ensuring that appropriate conservation measures ultimately do take place.

Diamondback Terrapins should not be confused with the **Red-eared Slider** (*Trachemys scripta elegans*), which is an introduced and **invasive** animal to Bermuda and can be readily recognized by its red stripe that runs along both sides of the head.



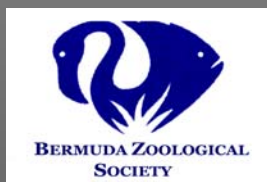
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GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

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