

Minutes for Diamondback Terrapin meeting at Burton 4H, Tybee Island, GA  
April 15, 2005

The following people were in attendance all with a 912 area code:

Meg Hoyle- DTWG (631-2628 megcoastal@aol.com), Thomas Bliss- Tybee Marine Science Center (786-4423 tbliss@tybeemsc.org), Angela Bliss- Burton 4 H (786-5534 acbliss@uga.edu), Paul Coote- Burton 4 H (paulc@uga.edu), Lindsay Abbott- Burton 4 H ([leaabbott@yahoo.com](mailto:leaabbott@yahoo.com)), Mallory Pearce- Tybee Town Council (786-5523 mpearce@scad.edu), Cindy Lingeback (598-2337 calingeb@uga.edu), Jessie Ebie (598-2354 jebie@uga.edu), Katie Hill (katieann@uga.edu), Biz Whiteknact ([biz@uga.edu](mailto:biz@uga.edu)) and Sue Finkle (598-2337 merlady@uga.edu)- Skidaway Marine Science Center, Rene Heidt- Sundial Charters (786-9470 rene@sundialcharters.net), Samantha Claar- Tybee resident (786-4351 samanthaclar@bellsouth.net), Sonjia Dittmar- Tybee resident (786-6231 dragonflytybee@aol.com), Jordan Gray- Diamondback Project Armstrong Atlantic University (659-0978 NtoriousJMG@aol.com), Terry Norton, DVM St. Catherine's Island (884-5005 w, 270-1180 c, 554-1618 h tnmynahvet@aol.com), Suzanne van Parreren- Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve (485-2300 suzanne\_vanparreren@dnr.state.ga.us), Denis Eliot-Vernon- Tybee resident (786-5726 [fullart@bellsouth.net](mailto:fullart@bellsouth.net)).

Information on the Diamondback Terrapin Working Group (DTWG) can be found at [www.dtwg.org](http://www.dtwg.org)

This meeting was organized to gather interested researchers, educators and citizens in the Tybee Island, GA area. The intention was to make connections between interested parties and start a discussion on how to promote terrapin conservation.

An interest was expressed in providing a consistent message from the education and outreach groups. These include the Tybee Marine Science Center, Burton 4H, and Skidaway Ocean Science Center. No one was able to attend from Oatland Island, but we will keep them in the loop in case they are interested in becoming involved. The Burton 4H Center has been working on a new diamondback terrapin display and the Tybee Marine Science Center has one in the long term plan. These groups reach thousands of school children and adults each year and can raise awareness about terrapins in general and specifically the threats they face. The contacts at these facilities are Sue Finkle, Skidaway; Angela Bliss, Burton 4 H; Kellie Lewis, Tybee Marine Science Center.

Anecdotal information points to numerous deaths annually of females on Hwy 80 (the Tybee causeway) during the nesting season. The general consensus is that remedying this problem is a long term effort that will start with raising awareness and then working with the GA Department of Transportation to find solutions. Information on crossings for wildlife can be found at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/wildlifeprotection/index](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/wildlifeprotection/index) under the heading "Critter Crossings".

Jordan Gray has initiated a project to salvage the eggs, raise the hatchlings for one year and release them. Jordan has gotten this project off to a great start and there is interest

from the education centers to use his work to educate people about terrapin roadkills. Terry Norton, DVM also offered his services to perform health assessments on the hatchlings prior to release. There is interest in expanding the project with volunteer help and a standardized data form so that all available information is obtained and can be used to help the terrapins. Meg Hoyle will work with GA DNR, Terry Norton and Jordan Gray on creating the data form. Rene Heidt will publicize the need for volunteers through the article she writes for the local paper. Thomas Bliss and the Tybee Marine Science Center volunteered to assist in receiving injured and dead terrapins.

There is interest in adding more information the existing terrapin crossing signs on the causeway. If the appropriate verbiage is suggested, this group will work on getting it approved by GA DOT and posted along the causeway. This may be a hotline number for people to call when a terrapin is on the road.

City Councilman Mallory Pearce announced that the Tybee City Council is supportive of efforts to assist the terrapins and will even support lowering the speed limit on the causeway.

Since UGA Marine Extension and GA DNR are still testing Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRD's) for crab traps, the group will wait for the final recommendation before promoting their use. Information on BRD research in other areas can be found in the bibliography of the DTWG web site.