

Terrapin are found in Maryland's estuarine waters



The Terrapin Petition to close Maryland's Diamondback Terrapin Fishery

Why a petition?

Diamondback terrapins are one of the treasures of the Chesapeake Bay. Once a traditional food source, terrapin were "fished" with such intensity that their populations crashed by the late 1920's.

Today market demand has surged again; not for local consumption but for Asian food markets both here and overseas. Often sold by out-of-state dealers, one wanted to purchase them by the ton.

Terrapin, like all turtles, have life spans that are more similar to our own than to any fish. Here in Maryland, terrapin do not mature until they are 8-13 years old and may live well beyond their 50's. Like sea turtles, very few young survive to become adults themselves.

Combined with threats that include drowning in crab and eel pots and nets, getting hit by cars on coastal roads, predation of nests and loss of nesting habitat, turtle biologists all agree that terrapins cannot sustain a commercial fishery.

One study on the Patuxent documents a 75% decline. Since terrapins stay close to home and live in local populations, we want to make sure we don't lose them again from any of the Chesapeake's shores.

Maryland is one of the last states to allow the commercial fishing of terrapin. Join us and ask Governor Ehrlich and the DNR Fisheries Service to protect the Chesapeake Bay's terrapin populations and close the terrapin fishery once and for all.



Terrapin breathe air and often get trapped and drown in crab pots



A female terrapin digging her nest above the high-tide line (above) and a young terrapin.

With age females can grow to reach 9", males 4"



Things you can do to help:

- 1) Sign The Terrapin Petition!
- 2) Contact Governor Ehrlich and your Delegates and Senators and let them know that you care about terrapins.*
- 3) Stay informed and add your email address to the back of the signature page to receive terrapin updates.
- 4) If you're out in a boat, collect abandoned "ghost" crab pots & bring them to shore for disposal.
- 5) If you see a turtle moving across the road, **make sure it's safe first** and then move it across in the direction it was headed.
- 6) If you see a terrapin nesting, try not to disturb her but keep still & watch her from a distance.
- 7) Learn more about terrapins and why they are an important part of the Chesapeake Bay.
- 8) **Share what you know and love about terrapins with others. This might be the most important thing you can do to save our terrapins!**

*For more information & easy ways to contact your representatives, please visit The Chesapeake Terrapin Alliance's web site: www.cterrapin.org