

## Diamondback Terrapin Turtle Protection Program Description & Call for Turtle Team Volunteers

**HISTORY:** Orenda Wildlife Land Trust, Inc., is a non-profit land and wildlife conservation organization founded in 1986, with wildlife sanctuaries covering over 750 acres across Cape Cod and beyond. At our Wyman Sanctuary in West Barnstable, we are supporting the reproductive success of the Barnstable Great Marsh Diamondback terrapin population (*Malaclemys terrapin*), by conducting nest monitoring and wildlife protection activities. In 2022, thirty-three active nests were identified, marked, and mapped. Although many nests were depredated, our volunteer Turtle Team protected over twenty percent of the active nests, and we estimate over 75 hatchlings successfully made it into the wild.



Join Our  
Turtle  
Team

**2023 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES:** In 2023, we will:

1. Identify, document, protect and mark terrapin nests through careful observation of turtle activity, soils, and other site conditions from June through September.
2. Install wildlife cameras to document nesting and predation activities.
3. Establish and map nest locations.
4. Document observations including physical, reproductive, and demographic data such as nesting dates, time of day, weather, clutch size, egg size and clutch survival, etc.
5. Log site observations including presence and quantity of actively nesting turtles, hatchling success vs. predation, weather, tides, date/time and other factors.
6. Investigate and document successful nesting through egg confirmation and then protect nests from depredation using wire mesh to exclude predators but allow hatchlings to emerge via small openings. Daily observation enhances volunteer presence, species/program success and rapid responsiveness.
7. Assist with hatchling release and dispersal to safe vegetative cover.
8. Initiate hatchling head start program partnerships (2023-24).



# CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



**If you would like to join our Turtle Team,  
please email Lisa Nagel, Program Coordinator, at  
[lisanagel@orendalandtrust.org](mailto:lisanagel@orendalandtrust.org)**

**For more information and to support Orenda:  
[www.orendalandtrust.org](http://www.orendalandtrust.org)**

## **Program Coordinator:**

- **Lisa Nagel**, Is an Orenda board member and the primary point of contact coordinating all aspects of Orenda's Turtle Protection Program. Lisa earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Syracuse University and a law degree from Loyola University of Chicago School of Law. She has worked in various nursing and legal capacities during her career and also as a Youth Services Librarian. Lisa can be reached at [lisanagel@orendalandtrust.org](mailto:lisanagel@orendalandtrust.org) or by calling 847-476-3018.

## **Land Steward:**

- **Johnny Robinson** is the land steward for Orenda Wildlife Land Trust. Johnny was born and raised on Cape Cod and was instilled with a love of nature by his parents, Mark and April. He recently graduated from College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, ME with a degree in Human Ecology, and a focus on land conservation. For his senior project, Johnny studied land trusts across each of the six states of New England, and created a series of podcast episodes compiling interviews, field recordings, and background research. Johnny can be reached at [johnnyrobinson@orendalandtrust.org](mailto:johnnyrobinson@orendalandtrust.org)

## **Advisors:**

- **Barbara Brennessel, Ph.D** is a Professor Emerita at Wheaton College from which she retired in 2013. Although originally trained as a biochemist, she has spent close to 20 years in diamondback terrapin research, conservation, and education. She is the author of "Diamonds in the Marsh: A Natural History of the Diamondback Terrapin," "Good Tidings: The History and Ecology of Shellfish Aquaculture in the Northeast," "The Alewives' Tale: The Life History and Ecology of River Herring in the Northeast," and a children's book, "The Adventures of Allie the Alewife." She is coauthor of "Tidal Water," a book about the history of Wellfleet's Herring River.
- **Ian Ives** is the Director of Mass Audubon's Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary and holds a MS in Conservation Biology (thesis involving Asian turtle conservation). Ian has conducted numerous ecological management, restoration, and conservation biology projects in his 30-year career in the environmental field including three years of field research on Blanding's turtles in Concord MA and two years of research on Asian turtles in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance. Ian currently oversees conservation and ecological management at 12 sanctuaries on Cape Cod. He has contributed several peer reviewed articles for publication, presented at numerous conferences in the scientific community and lectures regularly with Mass Audubon.

Orenda Wildlife Land Trust Inc. is also thankful for the training and advice offered by Mass Audubon Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary that helped guide this project.