Terrapin Conservation Efforts in Louisiana

Keri Lejeune
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Crab Subcommittee Meeting
March 11, 2021
• Proposed revisions to existing herp regulations
  ➢ Prohibit commercial harvest for DBT
  ➢ Prohibit take of any wild turtle eggs
  ➢ Update civil restitution bounties

• Louisiana Turtle Conservation Plan

• FY 21-22 Priorities for SWG proposals
  ➢ Investigate the current distribution, abundance, and genetics for DBT

• Gulf Coast DBT Conservation Action Plan (CAP)

• SEPARC/PARC TNT Workshop- Enhancing Cross-jurisdictional Partnerships to Confront the Illicit Turtle Trade in the SE U.S.

• State Herpetologist position
  ➢ Vacant since June 2020, until recently
Previous Research/Survey Efforts

- USFWS State Wildlife Grants
  - Surveys of the Aquatic Turtle Fauna in Southwestern Louisiana, with Emphasis on Three Louisiana Species of Conservation Concern (*Will Selman, Peter Lindeman, Eddie Lyons, Cybil Huntzinger, Irvin Louque, Jr. & Steve Shively*- 2011)

  - Evaluation of Diamondback Terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) Nesting Habitat and Reproductive Productivity throughout Coastal Louisiana (*Steven Pearson and Jon Wiebe*- 2012)

Current Research/Survey Efforts

- Nicholls State University (*Timothy Clay*; tim.clay@nicholls.edu)
  - Mark-recapture surveys
    - 2020- trapped with fyke nets at Elmer’s Island Wildlife Refuge (5x) and Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge (2x); trapped in June and just before Hurricane Laura, no terrapins were detected
    - 2021- trapping began in early March at Elmer’s Island; 1 terrapin detected
    - Plans to survey at Elmer’s Island and East Grand Terre this year
    - Future work includes nest surveys