



# Volunteer Diamondback Terrapin Survey

## Project Contact:

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## Project Summary

Diamondback terrapins were censused to collect data on abundance and distribution in the Bays. Volunteers and Center staff collaborate on a novel rapid assessment to determine population status.

## Why Do Diamondback Terrapins Matter?

Very little population data exists for diamondback terrapins in the Inland Bays. They face a variety of environmental and human threats, including predation, habitat loss, and vehicle strikes. Unlike every other turtle species, diamondback terrapins are lifelong residents of our coastal salt marshes. Most terrapin survey methods are time-intensive and costly, but a rapid assessment technique, made possible by our citizen scientists, multiplies the effect of our initial efforts to characterize the terrapin populations.

*Surveyors search for terrapins during the water-based survey.*



## How Do We Complete the Survey?

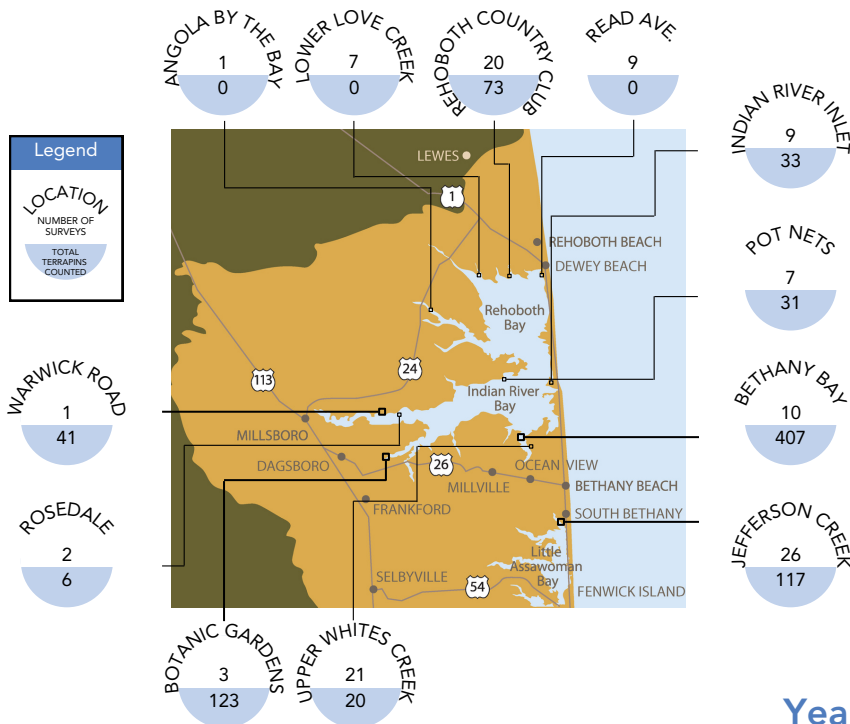
At low tide, volunteers count basking (showing their heads out of the water) diamondback terrapins in coastal waters in the Inland Bays. Surveys are done either from fixed locations along the shorelines or using small boats on pre-determined routes. Surveyors record the numbers and locations of terrapins observed during the surveys and submit the data to the Center's project manager.

## What Have We Learned?

The primary goal of this program is to determine the current abundance and distribution of diamondback terrapins in the Bays and to monitor long-term trends or changes. Diamondback terrapins play an important role in the ecology of coastal estuaries. The data collected through this citizen science program will be used by the Center to identify important areas for conservation and enhancement projects.



## 2022 Land Based Terrapin Survey Counts

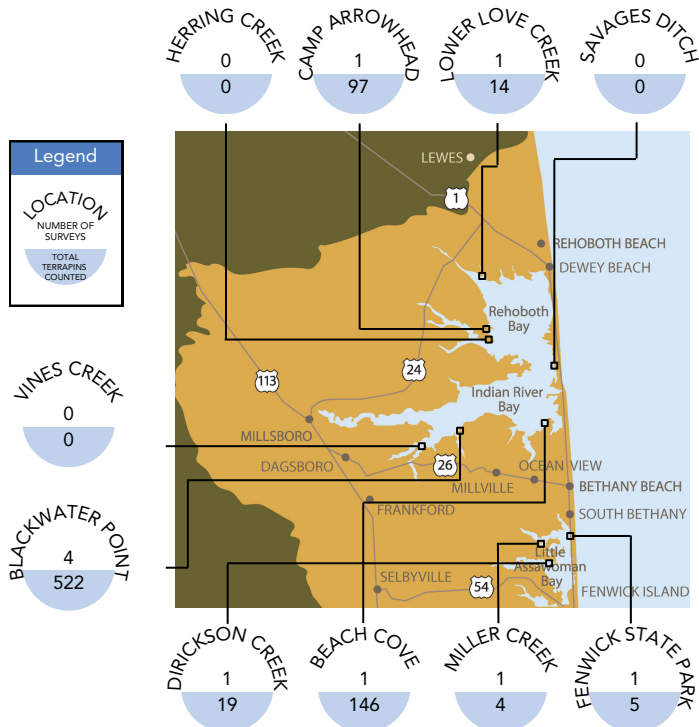


## 2022 Survey Highlights

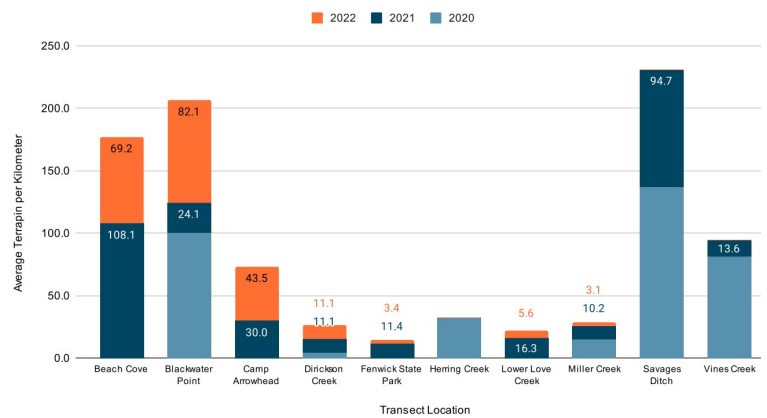
We have now completed the second year of a five-year pilot survey to learn more about the terrapins of the Bays. Below are some 2022 program highlights:

- In 2022, a total of 1,654 terrapins were counted at twelve land-based and seven water-based sites: 807 and 847 terrapins respectively.
- The highest terrapin average per mile was 132 terrapins at Blackwater Point.
- More terrapins were counted in 2022 compared to 2021.
- That difference could be due to the lower number of water-based surveys performed.

## 2022 Water Based Terrapin Survey Counts



## Yearly Comparison of Terrapin Counts



Graphic shows average counts of terrapins per location.

## Want to Get Involved?

Help us count terrapins! In 2023, we will need volunteers to help out with both water and land-based surveys. You can also keep an eye out for terrapins crossing the road and get involved with our terrapin outreach programs. For more information, go to [inlandbays.org](http://inlandbays.org).

2022 total terrapin counts by land-based (top) and water-based (bottom) site.



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The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a nonprofit organization established in 1994 to promote the wise use and enhancement of the Inland Bays and its watershed. With its many partners, the Center conducts public outreach and education, develops and implements restoration projects, encourages scientific inquiry, and sponsors research. To learn how you can get on board with the bays, go to [inlandbays.org](http://inlandbays.org).