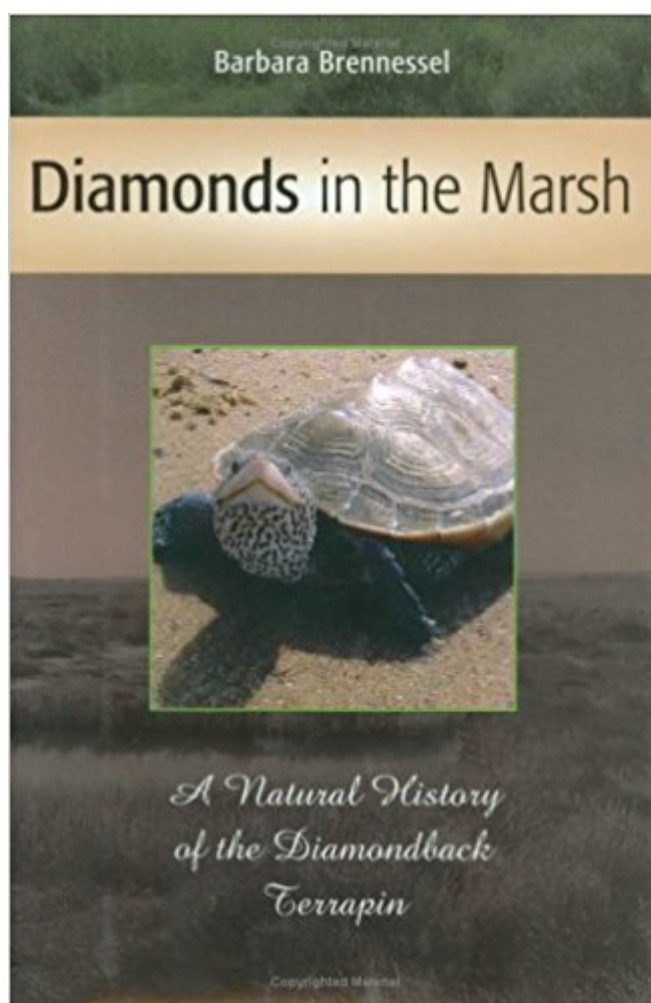


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# Diamonds In The Marsh: A Natural History Of The Diamondback Terrapin



## Synopsis

She's the mascot for the University of Maryland's sports teams (their slogan: Fear the Turtle) and her ancestors were nearly driven to extinction by Victorians who indulged in turtle soup. But, as she buries herself in the mud every night to sleep, the diamondback terrapin knows none of this. The size of a dinner plate, she can live at least forty years and is the only turtle in North America who can live in brackish and salty waters. The diamondback terrapin is named for the beautiful concentric rings on its shell. Its habitat ranges from Cape Cod to Corpus Christi, Texas, with seven subspecies identified along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Several diamondback populations have been the subjects of ecological studies in recent years, but most of that information was buried in scientific literature and various state and federal reports - until now. Synthesizing all known research on this remarkable animal, "Diamonds in the Marsh" is the first full-scale natural history of the diamondback terrapin. Focusing on the northern diamondback, Barbara Brennessel examines its evolution, physiology, adaptations, behavior, growth patterns, life span, genetic diversity, land use, reproduction, and early years. She also discusses its relationship to humans, first as an important food source from colonial times through the nineteenth century, and more recently as a cultural icon, frequently depicted in Native American art and design. She concludes with a look at contemporary hazards to the terrapin, and urges continued study of this marvelous creature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Environmentalists, ecologists and marine biologists will delight in this meticulously detailed but

highly readable look at the only North American turtle species that can tolerate the "fresh water, salt water, and everything in between" of its home off the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Brennessel, a professor of biology at Wheaton College in Massachusetts, argues that the diamondback terrapin's importance stems not only from its singular status "and that its beautifully detailed shell is a "one-of-a-kind evolutionary item" "but also from the threat to its existence by the increasing erosion of its natural habitat. She documents the terrapin's natural history by collecting, for the first time, crucial records and recent scientific studies that were previously found only in scattered scientific journals and reports. Although this specialized subject matter may not appeal to a mass audience, Brennessel offers the nonprofessional reader a wealth of fascinating information, from how the annual activity cycle of terrapins is dictated by water temperature to the quality and quantity of coastal zones needed to maintain and protect younger terrapins between their hatching and maturation, a relatively unstudied "black hole in terrapin life history." Photos. (Apr. 28) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Environmentalists, ecologists and marine biologists will delight in this meticulously detailed but highly readable look at the only North American turtle species that can tolerate the 'fresh water, salt water, and everything in between'" --Publishers Weekly"A serious treatment of the natural history of one of the most beloved creatures of the Eastern Seaboard... well illustrated with photographs."--Natural New England Magazine"A comprehensive natural history such as *Diamonds in the Marsh* is an invaluable tool in the study and conservations of a species, and can provide a solid foundation for future research, conservation, and management decisions. Brennessel effectively pulls together the bulk of literature on the diamondback and communicates it to the reader in a generally clear, uncluttered fashion so as to make it not only a resource for researchers, but also an interesting read for reptile aficionados."--Herpetological Review

It ought to be called, "everything you always wanted to know about Diamondback Terrapins". Yes, it fully met my expectations. I live quite close to one of the locations discussed in the books and formally lived in another and I certainly learned a lot about these interesting turtles.

This is an excellent book for those who are already knowledgeable about the diamondback terrapin and for novices. The book reads easily, with clear explanations, interesting detail and background information. The illustrations are clear and accurate. I purchased the book for as a gift for someone involved in a terrapin rescue project. She was thrilled with the gift because it contained information

she already knew and information that was new to her. I suggest this book for anyone interested in Eastern coastal waters and the wildlife that inhabits this area.

I took a field course with the author of this book last fall. She is a treasure trove of knowledge of this fascinating animal.

Good reading for those interested in the PRESERVATION of this type turtle. Endangered by Turtle Soup, this book is great for turtle lovers, especially Diamond Backs. Recommended !

Diamonds in the Marsh is an excellent source for anyone who wants to learn about this special reptile. Written with the biologist and non-biologist reader in mind it gives a historical and current history of the diamondback terrapin as it struggles to survive along the eastern coast. For the biologist it gives lots of scientific information and footnotes. For the average nature lover it also includes stories of how people are working to protect this lovely creature. A must book for anyone who is studying or just appreciating the diamondback.

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