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**Gouveia, Susan**

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**From:** Masser, Michelle  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 26, 2016 1:58 PM  
**To:** Harris, Laura  
**Cc:** Gouveia, Susan  
**Subject:** FW: NJDEP Press Release - DEP Issues Administrative Order Closing Diamondback Terrapin Season  
**Attachments:** Diamond Back Terrapin AO -- P4.pdf

CORRESPONDENCE

*Michelle Masser*

*Township Clerk*

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**From:** Rogers, Joseph [mailto:Joseph.Rogers@dep.nj.gov] **On Behalf Of** Randazzo, Cindy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 26, 2016 1:48 PM  
**To:** Randazzo, Cindy <Cindy.Randazzo@dep.nj.gov>  
**Subject:** NJDEP Press Release - DEP Issues Administrative Order Closing Diamondback Terrapin Season

Dear Municipal Clerk:

Please see the attached NJDEP Press Release concerning the administrative order closing diamondback terrapin season.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Cindy W. Randazzo

Director  
Office of Local Government Assistance  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
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# DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Chris Christie, Governor  
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor  
Bob Martin, Commissioner



## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2016

[www.nj.gov/dep](http://www.nj.gov/dep)

**Contact:** Caryn Shinske (609) 984-1795

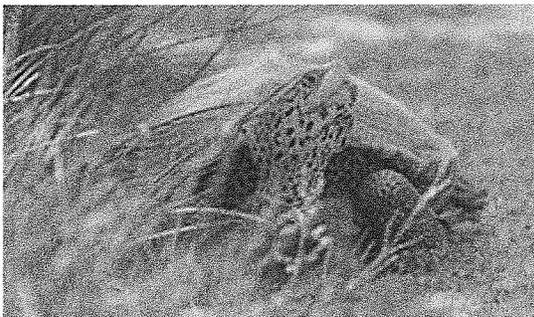
Lawrence Hajna (609) 984-1795

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### DEP ISSUES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER CLOSING DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN SEASON TO EASE HARVESTING PRESSURES ON SPECIES

**(16/P4) TRENTON** – Due to continued concerns about harvest pressures on northern diamondback terrapins in coastal areas of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin has signed an Administrative Order immediately closing the remainder of the commercial harvest season for this turtle species.

The diamondback terrapin is the only species of turtle that lives in the brackish waters of New Jersey's coastal marshes and estuaries. The commercial harvest closure is effective immediately and will remain in effect through the end of the harvest season on March 31.



“The diamondback terrapin has long been special to many people who live in or visit our coastal communities,” said Commissioner Martin. “Many people have dedicated countless hours to protecting its habitats and raising awareness about this unique species. We need to ensure the terrapin remains part of our coastal ecosystem.”

This is the second Administrative Order Commissioner Martin has issued closing the commercial harvest of this species. The Commissioner issued a similar order in March 2015, when the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council (NJMFC) and the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee advised that excessive harvesting was taking place in New Jersey to provide terrapins for out-of-state aquaculture operations and for overseas markets.

Division of Fish and Wildlife conservation officers will be on the lookout for anyone illegally harvesting terrapins. In addition to civil penalties, anyone charged with illegally harvesting a diamondback terrapin will be assessed a \$200 replacement fee for each terrapin in his or her possession.

The DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife has also been working with the NJMFC, as well as neighboring states, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other terrapin experts to develop management strategies to enhance protection of diamondback terrapins in order to sustain the species in New Jersey.

“As evidenced by our recommendation to DEP, the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council fully supports the extended closure of the diamondback terrapin harvest as we continue to establish future regulations,” said Council Acting Chairman Dick Herb.

In the past, commercial harvesting of terrapins in New Jersey was reported on a small-scale basis. But increased demand, particularly in Asian food markets, has put excessive pressure on the species.

In a 2014 incident, more than 3,500 terrapins were harvested from two locations in southern New Jersey to provide terrapins for an out-of-state aquaculture facility that raises them for overseas markets. More than 14,000 offspring of the wild adult terrapins were then exported to Asia.

Once abundant, terrapins decreased dramatically by the 1930s, due primarily to harvesting for food. Numbers started increasing again by the 1960s, but in recent decades the terrapin has been at risk again due to habitat loss, drowning in crab traps, and vehicle strikes.

Although the diamondback terrapin has not been listed as threatened or endangered in New Jersey, its status is listed as decreasing. As part of the state's recovery effort, the DEP will be conducting investigations of populations, ecological data, and habitat needs as it develops management strategies.

Diamondback terrapins, so named for the diamond-shaped patterns on its shell, are more closely related to freshwater turtles than marine turtles, and spend their entire life cycle in coastal marshes. They are an important part of the ecosystem, feeding on snails that can overgraze marsh grasses, leaving them barren mudflats.

For a copy of the Administrative Order, visit: [www.nj.gov/dep/docs/ao2016-02.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/docs/ao2016-02.pdf)

For more information on diamondback terrapins, including a range map, visit: <http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/species/fieldguide/view/Malaclemys%20terrapin%20terrapin/>

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