

Good Afternoon Clearwater neighbors,

We have an exciting opportunity through Davidson College to participate in an ongoing Eastern Box Turtle Citizen Project. We will collect data and send it to The Herp Atlas Program at the college as an entire neighborhood contribution. No individual personal information will be sent.

Being involved in Citizen Science Projects has many advantages and is a wonderful way to engage families with the environment. Besides getting outdoors in the garden, having fun outside and staying healthy, children can easily participate in the EBT Citizen Scientist Project. We will learn about EBTs live cycles, how many EBTs are in our neighborhood, record and report their data. Best of all, this project can be used for school science projects and we, as a neighborhood, will be contributing to the collective knowledge about EBTs.

Please consider my request to actively participate in this very worthwhile Citizen Science Project.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Wells

EBT Citizens Science Project co-ordinator for Clearwater and Shelter Cove on Lake Murray

Phone :803-732-3722

Email: Wells0412@gmail.com

The Project Details:

The Eastern Box Turtle Citizen Scientists Project at Clearwater and Shelter Cove on Lake Murray.

Charismatic Eastern Box Turtles (EBTs), *Terrapene carolina carolina*, are small land turtles with a high-domed carapace (top part of shell) and a hinged plastron (bottom part of shell) which allows them to close their shell tightly and hide its head, legs and tail. The carapace has a slight keel (raised ridge) along the midline and ranges from 5-8 inches (12-20 cm) in length. The carapace is brown or black with a highly variable pattern of yellow or orange markings within each scute (a large scale or plate). The plastron can be yellowish, brown or black and is either plain or marked with blotches or lines. Males are usually larger and more brightly colored than females, often having reddish or pinkish eyes (brown in females) and a concave plastron (flat or slightly convex in females). The scutes or scales on the carapace have observable growth rings which can be counted to give an approximate age of EBTs.

Our Neighborhood Citizen Science Project objectives:

- To involve children and their families in this Neighborhood Citizen Science Project.
- To make EBT observations over a period of a year.
- Fill in our Data sheet
- To upload our neighborhood collected data to [Home - Carolina Herp Atlas](http://www.carolinaherpatlas.org) www.carolinaherpatlas.org at Davidson College for their records in order for the Herp Department to extrapolate EBT information for NC and SC. The above is a hot button . Place your cursor over the purple notation Press the Ctrl button and click. This will take you directly to Davidson College for more information.
- To determine the status of EBTs in urban areas.

How to identify an EBT

- Patterned skin and carapace are brown and yellow.
- EBT's have growth rings on each carapace scale. These growth ring ridges can be counted to give an approximate age of the EBT that you found.
- In EBTs a **male has red irises** while **females have brown**. The pupils are always black, just like ours.
- They grow to Approx. 6-8 inches in length.
- EBT have walking feet, not flipper shaped feet and therefor are **not** aquatic.

What to do when you find an EBT in your yard.

- If you find an unmarked EBT, please call me at 803-732-3722. (Leave a message if I do not pick up) and together we will paint an identifying sequence number on the rear of the carapace. This code will be entered into the master data sheet which I will update and share with you, on only our neighborhood Nextdoor site, our neighborhood Facebook page and upload our data sheet (without addresses) to the Carolina Herp Atlas.
- If you find an EBT marked with white paint, the first number on the carapace represents the EBT's sequential number in which the turtle was found, the bottom number represent the year in which the EBT was first identified. See the attached Data Sheet. The photo each turtle, found to date, has the painted code on the rear of the EBT's carapace. The word 'Photo' is a hot button. Click in it to see the photo of each sequenced turtle.
- If the EBT you find already has a sequence number and date, call me to let me know of the EBT's sighting. We will enter this individual again on the data sheet. This important information will tell us where the EBT has moved.
- Do not hold the EBT captive.
- I will fill in the master data sheet with your sighting information.
- Measure the EBT's length and width using a flexible tape measure. If you do not have a flexible tape measure just use a piece of string which can then be measured on a ruler or on a hard-retractable tape measure.
- Take the EBT's photo of the carapace that clearly shows the patterns. Email me the photos at the above email address.

What do we want to discover about EBT?

- Sequentially identify box Turtles we may find from August 2020 to August 2021
- Quantify the number of EBTs that live among us
- Track the distances EBTs walk in our neighborhood
- Document what EBT find to eat in our neighborhood
- Note the ratio of male to female EBT
- Pinpoint where EBTs are found in our neighborhood.

I will send you the Data Sheet for your records each time a turtle is found.

I look so forward to having our neighbors participate in The Eastern Box Turtle of Clearwater and Shelter Cove on Lake Murray Citizen Scientists Project.

Call me with any questions or suggestions you may have. Together we will walk this road to discovering new science.

Thank you!
Jeanette Wells.