

## DIAMONDBACK TERRAPINS

Diamondback terrapins are small turtles that grow to about 9 inches from head to tail. They live in coastal marshes and are the only turtles adapted to live in brackish water. They eat insects, worms and clams. They lay clutches of 12 to 14 eggs above the high-tide line in warm sand.

- One thing that distinguishes terrapins from other turtles is sexual dimorphism — female and male adults look very different from each other. Males, at about 5 inches, are only about two-thirds as long as females and weigh half as much.
- Turtles lack the chromosomes that determine sex in mammals and birds. A hatchling's gender is determined by the temperature of the nest. Cooler nests produce males; warmer nests produce females.
- Those “turtle crossing” signs you see on area roads are aimed at protecting female terrapins, who come ashore to lay their eggs and often try to cross busy streets.

