



RESOLUTION 05-2021

A RESOLUTION OF THE TAMPA BAY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE CONSERVATION OF AN IMPERILED COASTAL TURTLE, THE DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN.

WHEREAS, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's (TBRPC/Council) six-county geographical area is comprised of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas counties and 23 municipalities contained therein, with over 3.6 million residents; and

WHEREAS, the Council has for over five decades addressed environmental challenges and concerns from a regional perspective as Florida's only multipurpose regional entity to coordinate intergovernmental solutions to multijurisdictional issues; and

WHEREAS, the Diamondback Terrapin is the only turtle in the world that is entirely restricted to brackish water and can be found in Florida's extensive estuarine, mangrove and salt marsh habitats; and

WHEREAS, seven recognized subspecies occur in 16 states from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Southern Texas; and

WHEREAS, the importance of Florida to the diamondback terrapin species is that the coastline represents 20% of the species entire range, home to five of the seven recognized subspecies making Florida habitats critical to the entire species; and

WHEREAS, one of the major threats to the species is crab pot mortality which first appeared in scientific literature in 1942 in which terrapins are a bycatch species in the crab pots which do not allow the terrapins to rise to the surface to breathe causing death by drowning; and

WHEREAS, research in Florida has shown that the use of a 4.5 x 12-centimeter bycatch reduction device (BRD) on crab pots can reduce terrapin mortality by 73.2%; and

WHEREAS, the BRD is obtainable for under \$2.00 per crab pot and/or free from certain environmental agencies and has little to no impact on the sex, size, or number of legal-sized crabs captured; and

WHEREAS, the TBRPC supports the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) regarding their efforts to require BRDs on all recreational crab pots and implement Terrapin Bycatch Reduction Zones which would require the use of BRDs on commercial crab pots along portions of the region's coastline; and

WHEREAS, the TBRPC encourages the FWC to research future inclusion of those terrapin habitats which do not fall in the current proposed zones, such as the Western Coasts of Pinellas and Pasco County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TAMPA BAY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL:

The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council supports the conservation efforts on behalf of the diamondback terrapin species by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to implement Terrapin Bycatch Reduction Zones and the use of Bycatch Reduction Devices for commercial and recreational crab pots.

DULY ADOPTED by The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council this 14th day of June 2021.

Dated this 14th day of June 2021



Commissioner Jack Mariano, Chair



Sean T. Sullivan, Executive Director