

# Tech Students Support Terrapin Conservation Project

Cape Tech's Natural Science Technology students received 10 diamondback terrapin hatchlings from the Wetlands Institute as part of the partnership with their "Terrapin Conservation Project: Head start program." Ms. Hanna Toft, Natural Science Technology teacher and FFA advisor, shared, "This partnership gives hatchlings an even better chance at survival as well as educating students with an unforgettable "hands on" experience."

Toft explained that all 10 of the hatchlings are raised from eggs extracted from female turtles who were killed crossing Stone Harbor Boulevard. These lucky eggs were incubated at higher temperatures resulting in them all being born as females to replenish the decreasing female population of terrapins.

As part of the conservation efforts, Tech students utilize calipers to measure the carapace of the turtles and record their data. Throughout the year students will measure the specimens to determine their growth rate. The goal is to have these terrapins grow to be the size of a 3-4 year old terrapin by the end of this school year. This is done by giving them high quality food, light and freshwater. The turtles will have a much better chance of survival at this size when the students release them into the marsh this spring.



Natural Science Technology sophomores Sarah Schuck (measuring terrapin), Ajanae Greer (recording data), and Ajalon Greer (holding terrapin) work together to increase the chance of survival for local terrapin population.