

The wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*) is listed as a “species of special concern” by COSEWIC (Committee on the status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) due to its susceptibility to human activity. Portions of the East, West and Main branches of the St. Mary’s River were surveyed during the summer of 2004, and twenty-four nests were located on five nesting beaches, containing a total of 209 eggs. All known nest sites were covered with predator excluders. Of the 209 eggs, thirty-five hatched successfully (frequency = 0.18) which is significantly lower (t-test,  $P < 0.001$ ) than the hatch success frequency of 0.61 observed in 2003. Weather data from the Department of Natural Resources was analyzed to determine potential causes of poor embryonic development. Temperature was significantly lower in four of eight 2-week periods (June through September) in 2004 than in 2003, and rainfall events were less severe, but more common. The data suggests that in 2004, poor embryonic development may have been caused by cooler temperatures, and possibly increased flooding events. Questionnaires were distributed to 211 homes throughout the study area, and 112 of these (53%) were completed. Many other stewardship activities ranged from giving school presentations and designing educational displays to the installation of “turtle crossing” and “sensitive habitat” signs. The description of nesting ecology and identification of critical habitat, such as nesting beaches, must go hand-in-hand with stewardship to ensure long-term conservation of this species.

Note: A full, hard copy version is available by contacting Mark Elderkin at (902)679-6091 or [elderkmf@gov.ns.ca](mailto:elderkmf@gov.ns.ca).