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CORRELATION OF TURTLE (*CHRYSEMYS PICTA*) FEEDING & THERMOREGULATORY BEHAVIOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL TEMPERATURE

As part of the ongoing census of the *Chrysemys picta* metapopulation in Black Rock Forest, Orange County, NY, turtles were collected both actively (by hand, dip net, and snorkeling), and passively, using basking traps (indicating turtles thermoregulating upwards) and hoop traps (indicating feeding), from April 26th to November 1st 2003. Trap records were compared to environmental (water) temperature at the time of capture to determine any correlation with turtle behavior (as measured by trapping success and trap type). The expectation that basking traps would be more successful early in the season due to the cold temperature, and the anticipated need of the turtles to up-regulate, was not supported by the data. Hoop trap success occurred for two weeks prior to basking trap success. Two thirds of all captures occurred within a range of 9-18°C. Trap success of either type was reduced during the warmest (20-27°C) period of the season (3rd week of June - 3rd week of August) except for a two-week period of increased feeding behavior following cessation of oviposition. At the end of summer when water temperature decreased rapidly, and fell below 18°C again, there was a significant increase in trap success of both kinds. Feeding behavior remained at a high rate until the end of September and water temperature fell below 6°C. Unexpectedly, hoop captures continued into the first week of November indicating feeding behavior continued, though at minimal levels, until traps were removed after the average water temperature stayed below 3°C for two weeks.