Grits, Okra, and Spotted Turtles: 
*Clemmys guttata* Down South

Jonathan Mays¹ and Houston Chandler²

¹Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Gainesville, FL
²The Orianne Society, Tiger, GA
- Georgia – 2014 to 2019: Stevenson/Chandler
- Florida – 2014 to present: Mays
Georgia
- Site 1: 1.6 ha (n=18)
- Site 2: 2.3 ha (n=11)
- females > males

Florida
- Site 1: 1.0 ha (n=16)
- Site 2: 8.6 ha (n=14)
- males > females
Georgia/Florida Status Surveys

- 4 Demographic Assessments (DA)
  - 2 sites per state

- 48 Rapid Assessments (TRA + VRA)

- 188 spotted turtles
  - 115 in Georgia (94 from DA, 21 from TRA/VRA)
    - 30% detection
  - 73 in Florida (70 from DA, 1 from TRA/VRA, 2 incidental)
    - 4% detection
Observations/Challenges

• Active year round
  • Activity dictated by water levels (vs. season)
  • Complicates predicting mating aggregation

• Detection difficulties
  - Uncommon and cryptic
  - Rarely bask, highly aquatic
  - Trap disturbance (bears, crayfish, raccoons)
  + Weather front events

• “Growing” season
  • Annuli counts and morphometrics indicate little age class structure
    • Faster overall growth rates?
    • Quicker time to sexual maturity?

• Abundance of suitable looking habitat

SPOTTED ME?

Report spotted turtle sightings to
spotted.turtle@MyFWC.com