Restoring Nesting Areas on the E.S. George Reserve, Michigan, to Reverse Declines in Turtle Nest Survivorship That Threaten Population Stability

ROY D. NAGLE[1], JUSTIN D. CONGDON[2], OWEN M. KINNEY[3], AND TODD L. QUINTER[1]

[1]*Environmental Science and Studies, Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania*

[2]*University of Georgia, Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, Aiken, South Carolina*

[3]*Darlington School, Rome, Georgia*


Chrysemys picta


Chelydra serpentina


Emydoidea blandingii


18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1


65


Elaeagnus umbellata

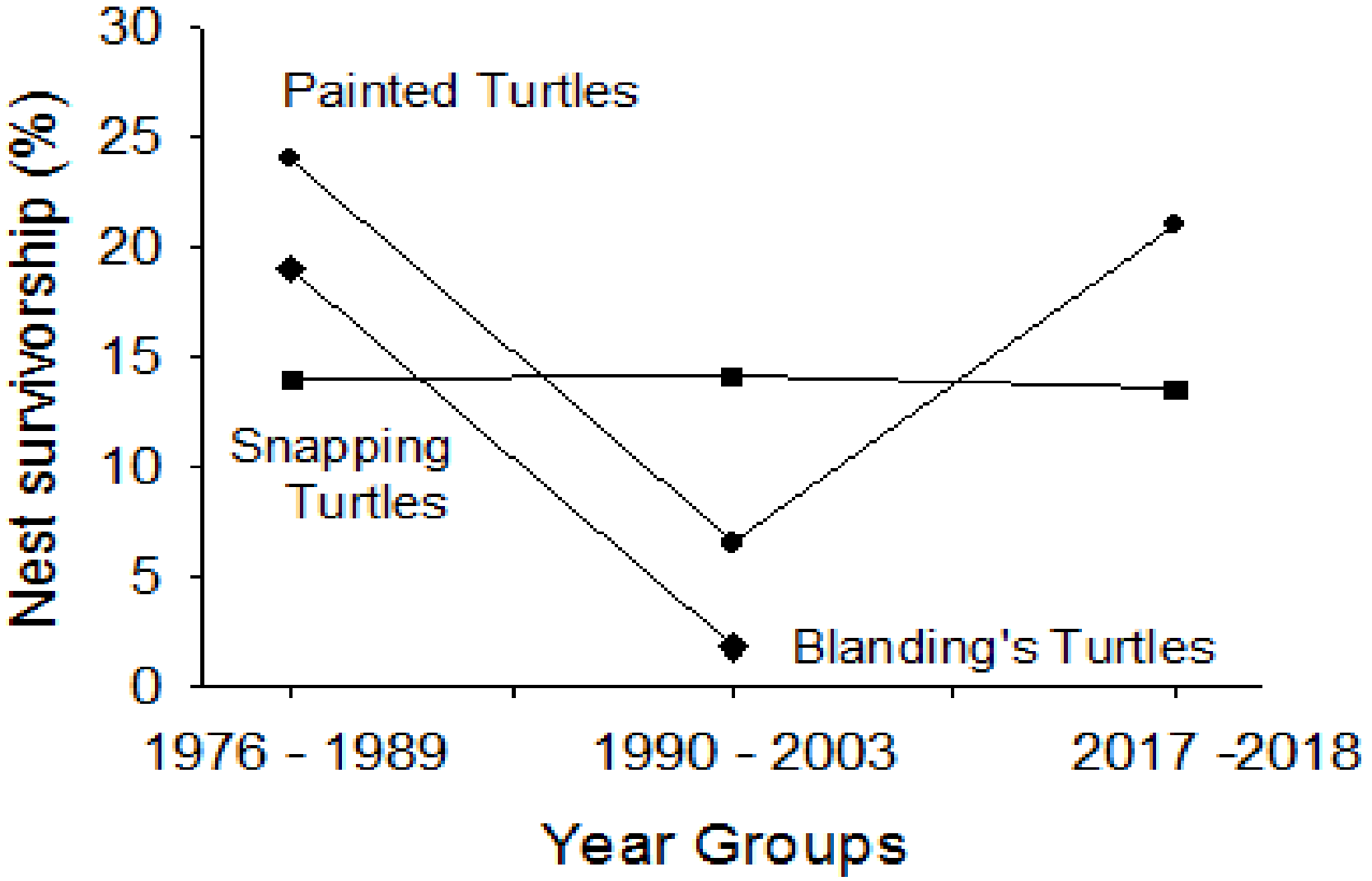
Loss of Nesting Habitat

- From 1975 to 2005:
  - Number of nesting areas reduced from > 50 to 8.
  - Acres of nesting habitat from > 70 to < 9.
- In 2016:
  - The only remaining nesting areas were roads, lawns, and firelanes.
  - Nesting habitat restoration initiated.

Pre-Autumn Olive

Autum Olive

Six nesting areas *restored*



Restoration Equipment

Restoration Equipment

Habitat Restoration Lessons

- Distribution, number and size of nesting areas are important ways to reduce predation rates.
- Knowledge of historic nest survivorship and nesting area locations was helpful.
- Restored nesting areas require annual tilling for several years to reduce seed bank & viable roots.
- Chain saw, tiller, and dedicated researchers and volunteers can do a lot to maintain nesting habitat.