
GLENN HEGAR
TEXAS COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



Call for Proposals
for
Western Chicken Turtle (*Deirochelys reticularia miaria*) Field Surveys

Anticipated Schedule of Events	Date
Call for Proposals Issuance	July 22, 2019
Proposals Due	Sept 18, 2019
Contract Execution	November 2019
Commencement of Work	January 2020

E-mail proposals to nat.res.research@cpa.texas.gov
by 5:00 PM September 18, 2019.

PART 1

Scope of Work

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts is issuing a Call for Proposals to Texas public universities for a comprehensive survey effort on the federally petitioned species, *Deirochelys reticularia miaria*, across the range of the species in Texas. For questions about the Call for Proposals, contact Melissa Salmon by email nat.res.research@cpa.texas.gov or phone (512) 463-4676.

Multiple proposals from a single public university may be submitted if multiple proposals are not submitted by the same department on a particular campus.

1.1 Species of Interest:

- Western Chicken Turtle, *Deirochelys reticularia miaria*

1.2 Geographic Area

- East Texas

1.3 Research Goals:

The purpose of this project is to address the status of the western chicken turtle *D. r. miaria* in Texas to inform the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Species Status Assessment (SSA) process for *D. r. miaria*, including the upcoming listing decisions and the development of conservation measures.

This project is also intended to inform future landscape-level research on *D. r. miaria* including, but not limited to, magnitude of threats to and effective conservation measures for the species and habitat. Landscape-level research is defined as research focused on informing effective restoration and/or conservation strategies for a species by assessing factors such as broad scale stressors to the species, the impacts of human development on the species throughout the range, and/or spatial and temporal changes in habitat.

1.4 Research Objectives:

This research will (1) estimate the current range and distribution of *D. r. miaria* in Texas and determine habitat associations for the species, (2) evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of various survey methods in identifying *D. r. miaria* individuals, and (3) recommend further landscape scale research needs for the species.

Suggested tasks to meet the objectives include:

- 1) Conduct range-wide surveys for *D. r. miaria* utilizing various methods at sites representative of all habitat types within the modeled species range in Texas.
 - Consult with Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) and FWS in the design of efficient and effective survey methods for western chicken turtle populations.
 - Methods may also include techniques such as environmental DNA sampling.
 - Collect and record abiotic and biotic environmental characteristics, GPS locations, presence and physical characteristics of *D. r. miaria* individuals.
 - Collect and record water quality parameters, habitat characteristics and other environmental variables.
 - Analyze habitat associations of the species of interest range-wide in Texas.
 - Analyze survey results to estimate species presence across Texas.
 - Develop a map of the current distribution and range of the western chicken turtle in Texas. Overlay environmental variables, when statistically significant and appropriate, with the range of the species to solidify knowledge of *D. r. miaria* habitat usage.
 - Display the final map and shapefiles on a publicly accessible website in accordance with 508-compliance and proprietary information guidelines.

- 2) Evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of various survey methods for *D. r. miaria*.
 - Compare *D. r. miaria* presence and habitat characteristics for each method.
 - Analyze results and recommend best methods for surveying *D. r. miaria* populations.
- 3) Recommend future research assessing anthropogenic threats to the species and habitat of interest at a landscape level.
 - Include recommendations for experimental design
 - Identify priority areas to assess the magnitude of threats.
 - Recommend methods for analyzing the magnitude of threats to the species.

**PART 2
PROPOSAL FORMAT**

2.1 Respondent Identifying Information

University Information	
University Name:	
Address:	
Tax ID Number:	

Identify all program and subcontractor personnel in the proposed research project. Subcontractors may include but are not limited to universities, state or federal agencies and private entities.

Provide the following summaries for principal investigators and key personnel, including subcontractors:

- curriculum vitae;
- list of accessible publications most closely related to the proposed research project; and
- description of each person’s knowledge of and experience with:
 - the ESA, recovery plans, and five-year reviews;
 - conducting research on the habitat of interest.
 - their particular task on the project

Limit to 5 pages or less per person.

2.2 Project Description

Organize proposed project description by section, as shown below. Page limits for each section are maximum numbers, not preferred numbers.

Project Summary: Limit one page. Provide a summary/abstract of the proposed project. Include hypothesis, design, and impact of research.

Background Information: Limit 5 pages. Provide a summary of existing scientific literature and data regarding *D. r. miaria* throughout the species’ entire historic range. Detail how information from this study would fill knowledge gaps for the species.

Questions/Hypotheses: Limit 2 pages. List hypotheses and specific research questions the project would answer.

Research Tasks and Methods: No page limit. Describe how each Research Objective would be addressed, including the following information:

- Methods to address each objective, including survey methods, locations and format of data sets. Explain deviations from suggested tasks in Section 1.4;
- Assumptions made in the proposed design;
- Description of access to or plan to obtain permission to access privately owned property where necessary to perform research, including a contingency plan if the desired access cannot be obtained;
- Description of expected challenges to the research and appropriate solutions to each challenge; and
- Description of plan to disseminate publicly accessible data.

2.3 Project Management

The proposed project timeline is two years.

Respondent must provide a schedule of work for each of the research tasks and deliverables described in this section using a format similar to the table below.

	Year 1				Year 2			
Task	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter

The proposed schedule should address the following:

- submission of detailed Research Plan to Comptroller for review prior to the commencement of work;
- procurement of permissions necessary to access sites;
- specific milestones for research tasks and project deliverables (*e.g.*, X number of sites sampled for species Y, data submitted to Comptroller);
- meeting with Comptroller (in person or via conference call) prior to the commencement of work;
- quarterly status updates with Comptroller and external experts (in person or via conference call);
- annual public stakeholder meetings or webinars to present/discuss the research;
- submission of annual and final reports and data sets; and
- meeting with Comptroller and interested stakeholders following the completion of the Final Report to discuss findings and conclusions.

2.4 Budget, Justification and Explanation

Use Attachment A to document costs, broken down by discrete tasks, to demonstrate an efficient use of project funds. Costs, including personnel and subcontractors, must be justifiable, reasonable and necessary, and directly relate to the research objectives.

In the event Respondent is funded for other research projects related to the Species of Interest, Respondent must identify the funding source and percentage of salary, time, and other resources that are dedicated to the other project. Respondent must describe plans for leveraging the proposed funding such as collaborating with other researchers, institutions, and agencies to avoid duplication of effort and ensure funds are used efficiently.

ATTACHMENT A

The maximum budget allocated for this project is \$250,000, with the understanding that this amount is contingent upon the availability of funds provided to Comptroller by the Texas Legislature and other sources for the purpose of endangered species research.

Provide budget breakdown for each task described in the proposed research project. Complete the table below and provide a narrative explanation of each cost by category.

Category	Year 1	Year 2
Contractual		
Personnel [title, time worked, rate]		
Travel		
Supplies		
Equipment		
Total Direct Costs		
Indirect Costs		
Total Project Cost		

The following is a summary of the supplemental information needed for each category.

Contractual: Expenses for services under contract with third parties. List names of each subcontractor and contact information, as well as detailed information regarding all costs related to subcontractors, including but not limited to the budget categories set forth in the table above.

Personnel: For all individuals collaborating on the project, list titles, time dedicated to project, and compensation rates (including benefits and tuition).

Budgeted amounts should be based on, and clearly describe, the amount of effort that each personnel member will be putting into the project.

Travel: Lodging, transportation, and meal reimbursement in accordance with State of Texas travel guidelines. Meals are reimbursed based on actual expenses. The Comptroller does not pay a per diem amount and will not reimburse for tips or alcohol.

Supplies: Routine costs for items needing replenishment throughout project.

Equipment: Capital expenses for equipment costing over \$1,000 per item. Include make and model (or similar) of equipment, item purpose, and direct benefit to the project.

Indirect Costs: The indirect costs must be capped at ten percent (10%) of the requested direct costs. The Comptroller does not reimburse for indirect costs calculated on indirect costs billed by subcontractors. Failure to submit a budget with indirect cost capped at ten percent (10%) will result in disqualification.

Note: Expenses generally not eligible for reimbursement by the Comptroller are computers, software, vehicles, vehicle maintenance or repairs, non-essential travel, laundry services, registration or cancellation fees, out-of-state conferences or in-state conferences unless personnel are presenters. If requesting any of these items, include a detailed explanation that clearly states why the item is necessary to the project.