



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO

GOVERNOR

MIKE D. McDANIEL, Ph.D.

SECRETARY

**For Immediate Release**

Aug. 7, 2006

**Contact:** Rodney Mallett

**Telephone:** 225.219.3964

### **Turtle Findings on Eunice Lake Released**

BATON ROUGE -- A recent study on animals in Eunice Lake showed that one particular species of turtle, the red-eared slider, suffered from a shell disease, according to a report from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

The report states that tissue samples taken from the diseased turtles were analyzed and showed no chemicals related a train accident that occurred in 2000. "The lack of chemicals in the tissue samples shows that the turtles and fish are not being exposed to chemicals from the train derailment," according to the report.

The report noted that the cause or causes of the shell disease are not well understood by the scientific community. However, the disease processes identified in the Eunice turtles are similar to those reported in other turtle populations in other states and are consistent with viral and/or bacterial infections.

The report states, "No other fish, amphibian, or reptile was observed to be affected. If chemicals were the cause for the turtle shell disease, then it is likely that more than one type of turtle would have been affected and that fish, amphibians, or other reptiles would also have been affected."

For the extensive study, scientists analyzed 47 turtle tissue samples, 45 fish tissue samples, 22 surface water samples, 21 bottom sediment samples, and three years of fish surveys.

--30--

**DEQ COMMUNICATIONS**

[WWW.DEQ.LOUISIANA.GOV](http://WWW.DEQ.LOUISIANA.GOV)