



Emys reticulata.

Sera pinx't

P. S. Duvau, Lith. Phil^a

EMYS RETICULATA.—*Bosc.*

Plate VII.

CHARACTERS. Shell ovate, gibbous, ecarinate, entire, longitudinally rugous; dusky brown, reticulated with yellow lines.

SYNONYMES. *Testudo reticulata*, *Bosc*, Manuscript Notes, communicated to Daudin.

Testudo reticulata, *Daudin*, Hist. Nat. des Rept., tom. ii. p. 144, pl. xxi. fig. 3.

Testudo reticularia, *Latreille*, Hist. des Rept., tom. i. p. 124.

La Tortue reticulaire, *Bosc*, Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxxiv. p. 265.

Emys reticulata, *Schweigger*, Prod. Arch. Königsb., tom. i. p. 300.

Emys reticulata, *Merrem*, Versuch eines Syst. der Amphib., p. 26.

Emys reticulata, *Say*, Jour. Acad. Nat. Scien. Phil., vol. iv. p. 204.

Testudo reticulata, *Leconte*, Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. N. Y. vol. iii. p. 103.

Emys reticulata, *Fitzinger*, Neue Class. der Rept., p. 45.

Emys reticulata, *Harlan*, Med. and Phys. Res., p. 152.

Emys reticulata, *Dumeril et Bibron*, Hist. Nat. des Rept., tom. ii. p. 291.

Chicken Tortoise, *Vulgo*.

DESCRIPTION. The shell is oval, broadest posteriorly, very convex, ecarinate and entire, or but slightly sub-emarginate behind, and longitudinally rugous. There are five vertebral plates; the anterior almost pentagonal and broadest in front; the second and third are hexagonal; the latter concave on its posterior border; the fourth hexagonal, broader, and rounded on its anterior surface to fit the posterior margin of the third vertebral plate, and is narrow and sometimes emarginate behind; the fifth is heptagonal, rounded inferiorly and posteriorly, and joined to two whole and two half marginal plates. The first lateral plate is

large and sub-rhomboidal; the second and third are pentagonal, the superior angle most acute; the fourth is quadrilateral. There are twenty-five marginal plates, which form a simple cutting border, in general without serræ, though there is sometimes a small notch between the supra-caudal plates; the nuchal, or intermediate, is very small, oblong, or nearly a parallelogram in shape. The remaining plates are quadrilateral; those situated in front, or those over the thighs, are largest.

The sternum is oblong, nearly of the same size at both extremities; full and rounded in front, emarginate behind. The gular plates are triangular, with their bases forward and rounded, and their apices directed backwards; each has a remarkable prominence on its upper surface, near the outer angle of the base; between these knobs the plates are hollow for the neck; the brachial are quadrangular, broader and rounded externally, narrow and straight within. The thoracic plates are quadrilateral, elongated in the transverse direction; the abdominal are broad and pentagonal; the femoral large and quadrilateral; the sub-caudal hexagonal, with rounded bases directed posteriorly. Of the supplemental plates, the axillary are small and triangular, with their apices turned backwards; the inguinal are larger, rhomboidal, broadest behind, narrow and pointed before.

The head is small, long and narrow, with the snout a little pointed; the nostrils are anterior. The upper jaw is slightly emarginate; the lower is entire, and furnished with a hook in front. The eyes are prominent and large, the pupil black, the iris golden, with a black band passing longitudinally through it. The neck is of great length.

The anterior extremities are rather short and rounded; the fore-arm covered with large scales, disposed in transverse lines, and a row of square fleshy folds along the superior border; its posterior surface is scaly and granulated; there are five fingers, palmated, sustaining five short, strong, slightly curved nails. The posterior extremities are also covered with scales, but they are smaller than those of the anterior; the tarsus is flattened, and sustains five fully palmated toes, four

only of which are furnished with nails. The tail is short, thick, scaly, and pointed at the tip.

COLOUR. The shell is dark brown, with a yellow vertebral line from its anterior to its posterior extremity. All the plates of the shell are marked with yellow lines; those of the vertebral and lateral plates run frequently into each other, and finally descend perpendicularly through each of the marginal plates, dividing them into anterior and posterior portions. These lines communicate so frequently as to give a reticulated appearance to the shell; they are often less distinct on the vertebral and lateral plates than is represented in the accompanying figure, which was drawn from a specimen of great beauty. On old shells these lines are nearly obliterated, or are only brought into view when the shell is moistened; nor can they be traced as continuous with those of the marginal plates.

The sternum is yellow, as well as the inferior surface of the marginal plates, the fourth and fifth of which, and sometimes the sixth, are marked with an oblong or round black spot; below these spots on the wings is a broad black bar. Much variety, however, exists in this marking; frequently only two of the marginal plates have the black spots, and a third is placed on the posterior part of the wings; at others the wings are marked with a black bar alone, and there are no spots on the marginal plates.

The anterior extremities are black above or dark brown, marked with a broad longitudinal yellow band continued to the toes, the webs of which are also yellow; the inferior surface is dusky, and marked with transverse yellow bands and bars; these are by far the more numerous and distinct about the shoulder. The posterior extremities are dusky above, with large bands and blotches of yellow; the posterior surface of the thigh is yellow, with transverse black bars. The tail is black, with three longitudinal yellow lines; the margin of the vent is yellowish.

The skin of the head and neck is dark brown on the superior surface, with

numerous small longitudinal yellow lines. These lines vary in extent; some reach the whole length of the neck; others are intermediate, less distinct, and shorter; a remarkable one begins at the snout and runs between the eyes, terminating at the occiput; another and still larger begins at the snout, below the nostrils, descends to the angle of the mouth, increasing in size to the neck; other lines are also seen to begin at the back of the eyes and run along the neck; a distinct line begins above the orbit and runs to the tympanum. The jaws are horn-colour, marked with yellow lines that traverse them obliquely. The throat is dusky yellow, with three longitudinal lines of brighter yellow and waving lines of a dingy brown.

DIMENSIONS. Length of shell, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches; breadth, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches; length of sternum, 8 inches 10 lines. The head and neck, taken together, are nearly as long as the sternum.

HABITS. The habits of the *Emys reticulata* are very similar to those of the *Emys serrata*. They inhabit ponds and stagnant waters, where they may be seen slowly swimming from place to place; and as the head and neck alone are visible, they might easily be mistaken for the water-snake, which belongs to the same locality; or they may be observed in great numbers basking on the trunk of some fallen tree, from whence they plunge into the water on the slightest alarm—the noise of the splash of one disturbs his neighbours, who all rapidly disappear. Being of so timid a nature, taking them is a work of some difficulty; they are, however, frequently brought to our markets, where they are more prized than the *Emys serrata*.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. The *Emys reticulata* has a range of small extent. Leconte gives Fayetteville, North Carolina, as its northern limit, and I would assign Georgia as its southern, as I have no evidence of its existence in Florida; nor do they ever appear at any great distance from the seaboard.

GENERAL REMARKS. There can be no doubt that Bosc first observed this

animal in Carolina, and that he furnished a manuscript description of it to Daudin,* under the name it now bears, which has been very generally received by naturalists. In fact, the very specimen from which Daudin took his description is still preserved in the Garden of Plants at Paris.† I have no hesitation in putting the *Emys reticulata* of Say among the synonymes of this animal, although Leconte, Dumeril and Bibron suppose it to refer to the *Emys concinna*. The very description of Say is sufficient to show the animal he meant: "shell ovate, posterior marginal plates entire, lateral ones beneath with three black spots over the suture; sternum very narrow, elongate and oval."‡ Furthermore, he says,§ the only specimen he ever saw was in the Philadelphia Museum, and that it corresponds well with the figure of Daudin. Besides this, Mr. Peale, the Director of the Philadelphia Museum, shewed me the identical specimen from which Say took his description, on which was marked, in his (Say's) own handwriting, *Emys reticulata*.

* Hist. Nat. des Rept., tom. ii. p. 144.

† Leconte, Ann. Lyc. Hist. Nat. N. Y., vol. iii. p. 108.

‡ Say, Jour. Acad. Nat. Scien. Phil., vol. iv. p. 204.

§ Jour. Acad. Nat. Scien., vol. iv. p. 209.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Emys reticulata – Bosc." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 1, 59–63.
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