



Emys Mobilensis

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EMYS MOBILENSIS.—*Holbrook.**Plate IX.*

CHARACTERS. Shell oval, ecarinate; convex anteriorly, depressed posteriorly, entire in front, emarginate and sub-serrate behind; jaws serrated; inferior furnished with a hook.

DESCRIPTION. The shell is regularly oval, broadest and flattened posteriorly; convex, entire in front, but emarginate and sub-serrate behind. Of the five vertebral plates, the anterior is urceolate, smallest in front, with three articulating margins, larger behind and convex; the second, third and fourth are hexagonal; the third slightly concave on its anterior margin; the fourth smaller and concave on its posterior; the fifth is irregularly triangular, its apex rounded, and directed upwards, and its basis cut into four articulating margins. The lateral plates are very large, the anterior triangular, the second and third pentagonal, and the fourth quadrilateral; all these plates are longitudinally rugous. The marginal plates are twenty-five in number; the nuchal is a parallelogram; the first is irregularly quadrilateral, rounded posteriorly, broad and straight anteriorly; the second is also quadrilateral, with its superior internal angle greatly elongated, to enter between the first marginal and first dorsal plates; all the remaining marginal plates are quadrilateral, the posterior and internal angle of the three last are salient, which gives a slightly serrated appearance to the shell, at its posterior margin; all these plates, except the intermediate and anterior, are marked with one or more concentric striæ, at the junction of the lateral and vertebral plates.

The sternum is oblong, full, and entire in front, and emarginate behind. The gular plates are triangular, with rounded bases, and their external and anterior angles projecting; the brachial are quadrilateral, the smallest border directed inwards; the thoracic are quadrilateral, and elongated transversely; the abdominal are broad and hexagonal, narrowest externally; the femoral are quadrilateral, with the shortest border directed internally; the sub-caudal plates are rhomboidal, the anterior angle prolonged. Of the supplementary plates, the axillary are irregularly quadrilateral; the anterior angle elongated and pointed; the femoral is also quadrilateral, broadest posteriorly, with the anterior and external angle greatly prolonged.

The head is rather large, the snout pointed. The eyes are of moderate size; the pupil black; the iris reticulated, with black and yellow lines. The upper jaw is serrated throughout its whole extent, as well as the lower, which is furnished with a hook.

The anterior extremities are strong, covered with large scales in front, and scales and granulations behind; there are five fingers, palmated, and furnished each with a short, strong, nearly straight nail. The posterior extremities are long, round at the thigh, much flattened at the tarsus; the toes are five, palmated, but four only are furnished with nails. The tail is short, thick at the root, but soon becomes small and pointed.

COLOUR. The vertebral and lateral plates are brown, reticulated with yellow lines. The marginal plates are likewise brown, with each a yellow line, which begins at the centre of the inferior margin and runs to the middle of the plate, where it bifurcates; one portion runs forward, and the other backward, and as the lines of the neighbouring plates meet, the margin has the appearance of being festooned.

The sternum is yellow, as well as the inferior surface of the marginal plates; each of these is marked by a large black blotch, at its junction with the neigh-

bouring plate; in the centre of each blotch is a yellow spot, with two concentric lines of the same colour; below these is frequently a black bar; the supplemental plates are also marked by a black blotch.

The head is dusky brown above, marked with longitudinal yellow lines; one begins at the snout, and runs along the crown of the head to the occiput; smaller lines run on each side of this; another line begins at the superior and inferior border of the orbit; this increases till it becomes a band, and runs along the neck; two other lines come from the orbit, one runs to the neck, above, and the other below the tympanum, where it is continuous with a larger line that comes from the lower jaw. The throat is ash colour, marked with three broad, yellow lines; one begins at the chin, and soon bifurcates, and in this bifurcation is included the third line.

The anterior extremities are dusky in front, with longitudinal yellow lines; the margins of the web are yellow; the posterior surface is marked with blotches and bands of yellow. The posterior extremities are dark in front, with longitudinal lines of yellow; on the inferior surface the yellow colour prevails over the dusky. The tail is dusky, with longitudinal yellow stripes.

DIMENSIONS. Length of shell, 15 inches; greatest breadth, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches; length of sternum, $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches; greatest elevation, 6 inches.

HABITS. I have had no opportunity of observing the habits of this animal; but from the shape and form of the extremities, it would seem to be eminently aquatic.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. As yet, Alabama is the only state in which this animal has been found, though it doubtless inhabits others. It is numerous in the neighbourhood of Mobile, where it is greatly esteemed as an article of food.

GENERAL REMARKS. This is a fine species of Emys, being next to the Emys
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floridana in size, and which in fact it almost equals. Leconte informs me that he observed it many years ago in Alabama, and proposed calling it *Emys mobilensis*, to which I have no objection, as I have been informed that it is not unfrequently sent to the New Orleans market, where it is known under the name *Mobilianer*.

This animal is perhaps most nearly allied to the *Emys rubriventris*, from which, however, it differs specifically; in this species both jaws are finely serrated; the shell is not compressed at the side, it is more elevated in front, and more depressed, and broader behind; the shell is brown, reticulated with yellow lines; it is twice the size of the *Emys rubriventris*, and has never yet been found within seven hundred miles of its locality.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Emys mobilensis – Holbrook." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 1, 71–74.
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