



Emys Picta
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EMYS PICTA.—*Schneider.*

Plate X.

CHARACTERS. Shell entire, sub-oval, depressed, smooth; dorsal plates black, bordered with yellow bands.

SYNONYMES. *Testudo picta*, *Schneider*, *Schildk.*, p. 348.

Testudo picta, *Gmelin*, *Syst. Nat. Lin.*, tom. i. pars iii. p. 1045.

Testudo picta, *Schoepff*, *Hist. Test.*, p. 20, tab. iv.

Testudo picta, *Latreille*, *Hist. des Rept.*, tom. i. p. 141.

Testudo picta, *Shaw*, *Gen. Zool.*, vol. iii. p. 45, pl. x. fig. 2.

Testudo picta, *Daudin*, *Hist. Nat. des Rept.*, tom. ii. p. 164.

Emys picta, *Merrem*, *Versuch eines Syst. der Amphib.*, p. 23.

Emys picta, *Schweigger*, *Prod. Arch. Königsb.*, vol. i. p. 306, 431.

Emys picta, *Say*, *Jour. Acad. Nat. Scien. Phil.*, vol. iv. p. 205.

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

Testudo picta, *Leconte*, *Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. N. Y.*, vol. iii. p. 115.

Emys picta, *Gray*, *Syn. Rept.*, p. 26.

Clemys picta, *Wagler*, *Natürlich. Syst. der Amphib.*, p. 137.

Emys picta, *Harlan*, *Med. and Phys. Res.*, p. 151.

Emys picta, *Dumeril et Bibron*, *Hist. Nat. des Rept.*, tom. ii. p. 297.

Chequered tortoise, *Vulgo.*

DESCRIPTION. The shell is sub-oval or oblong, broadest behind, flattened, smooth, entire and ecarinate. There are five vertebral plates; the anterior is smaller than the second and third, and is quadrilateral, widest in front, with its margin arched outward; posteriorly it is elongated to enter a sinus of the

adjoining plate; the second, third and fourth are hexagonal, and the fifth heptagonal, with its borders of very unequal extent, and greatly dilated in the transverse direction. Of the lateral plates, the anterior are very regularly triangular, their bases being rounded and joined to five marginal plates; the second, third and fourth are quadrilateral. The marginal plates are twenty-five in number, and make one entire cutting margin; the nuchal, or intermediate, is nearly a parallelogram, slightly notched or serrated anteriorly; the anterior marginal is pentagonal, while the others are quadrilateral; the anterior, and those covering the thighs, being largest.

The sternum is oblong, broad, and of nearly equal length with the shell; full and rounded anteriorly, with the posterior border entire or but slightly emarginate. The gular plates are triangular, the bases forward, and the apices directed backward; the brachial are irregularly triangular, the bases being rounded and turned outward, the apices inwards and truncate; the thoracic and abdominal are quadrilateral, broad, and rounded externally; the sub-caudal are triangular, with rounded bases. Of the supplemental plates, the axillary are very small and triangular, with their apices forward; the inguinal are of the same form, but larger, and have their apices turned in the opposite direction.

The head is small, but full, and rounded in front; the snout being rather obtuse than pointed. The upper jaw is entire at the sides, but is notched anteriorly. The lower jaw is slightly hooked or turned upwards in front. The nostrils are anterior and near together. The eyes are large and brilliant; the pupil black; the iris golden, with a black band passing through it horizontally.

The anterior extremities are short, covered with large scales disposed transversely in front, and smaller scales, intermixed with granulations, behind; the fingers are five in number, slightly webbed, and each furnished with a short, delicate, and slightly incurvated nail. The posterior extremities are rounded above, but flattened at the tarsus, which sustains five fully palmated toes; the

four internal alone are provided with nails. The tail is moderately long, narrow, and covered with ranges of scales.

COLOUR. The *Emys picta* may be easily distinguished from all others of the genus, by the beautiful colour and markings of the shell. In general it is of a very dark brown, yet in some varieties it is much lighter, approaching to a dark olive; along the spine is a yellow line; the vertebral and lateral plates are bordered with the same colour. In old animals these are fawn colour; but in the young they are so bright, especially when seen under water, as to resemble golden bands. These bands vary in breadth; in some specimens they are narrow, almost linear; while in others they are more than two lines in breadth. The marginal plates are all marked both above and below with a bright red spot in the centre, which is surrounded by concentric lines of the same colour; at times the upper surface of the marginal plates appears clouded with red, resembling the mineral called blood-stone (Hæmatite).

The sternum is entirely yellow, except at the wings, where it is somewhat dusky.

The head above is dark, almost black, with several small yellow lines running from the snout to the orbit of the eye. The upper as well as the lower jaw is of dark fawn colour, marked with yellow lines; one of the lines passes through both jaws in its descent, and continues along the neck. Back of each eye is an oblong yellow spot; and another, of the same colour, but still larger, is situated behind the occiput; from each of these spots is continued a longitudinal line along the neck. The neck itself above is black, marked with longitudinal lines of orange and red; the throat is of the same colour, and marked with similar lines, though they are smaller and more numerous; one begins at the chin, and, after a short distance, subdivides; between this subdivision is a central line; on either side of these principal horizontal lines are others intermediate and less distinct.

The anterior extremities are black in front, with one or two red lines, the one

nearest the middle being the larger; the posterior surface is dark, and mottled with orange or red. The posterior extremities are black, both above and below, but the dark colour is relieved by orange lines; one begins near the anus, and runs along the posterior border of the thigh. The tail is dark above, and mottled at its base with red spots; a short longitudinal yellow line runs along the inferior surface, and a red line along the superior. The colours of this animal vary greatly in degree; they are always brightest in the young.

DIMENSIONS. Length of shell, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; greatest breadth, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches; length of sternum, 6 inches; elevation, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

HABITS. The *Emys picta* frequents ditches, ponds and pools, and is abundant in rivers, where the waters are sluggish; it spends almost the whole day basking in the sun on the banks of rivers, or on fallen trees or logs. It is very timid, and escapes rapidly when disturbed. It hibernates early, and is the first to be seen in spring. Its food is insects, tadpoles, young frogs, earth-worms, &c. It takes the hook readily, and is on that account very troublesome to anglers. Its flesh is sometimes eaten, but is not much esteemed.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. The *Emys picta* has perhaps as wide a range as any of the genus found in the United States. I have observed it along the Atlantic border, from Maine to Georgia—south of this I have no evidence of its existence. It is found in the north-western part of the country, as Dr. Pickering informs me that Mr. W. Cooper has seen it at the Saute de St. Marie, the outlet of Lake Superior.

GENERAL REMARKS. This animal was first described by Schneider, under the name *Emys picta*, by which appellation it is now universally known to naturalists. The colour and marks of this animal being too remarkable to allow it to be confounded with any other, so is there less confusion in the synonymes than in those of any other of our *Emydes*.

To the list of synonymes, however, I would add the *cinereous* tortoise of Brown,* the *Testudo cinerea* of Schoepff† and other naturalists, which is certainly the young of the *Emys picta*, as was first determined by Palissot de Beauvais, who had an opportunity of examining living specimens in Pennsylvania. It also seems highly probable to me that the *Emys Bellii* of Gray,‡ and of Dumeril and Bibron,§ is only a variety of this animal, as I have met with specimens of the *Emys picta* slightly depressed along the vertebral column, of a dusky-olive colour, and marked with bands, not unlike those described as belonging to the *Emys Bellii*.

* New Ill. Zool. p. 115, tab. xlviii. figs. 1, 2.

‡ Synop. Rept. p. 34.

† Hist. Test., p. 18, tab. v. figs. 2, 3.

§ Hist. Nat. des Rept., tom. ii. p. 302.



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