

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF GIGANTIC LAND TORTOISE FROM INDEFATIGABLE ISLAND.

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CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER, in his *Journal of a Cruise made in the Pacific Ocean*, was the first man to draw attention to the differences between the tortoises of the various islands of the Galápagos group. On page 176 of the 1815 edition he states that Mr. Adams (the surgeon of the *Essex*) reported that the tortoises of "Porter's Island," *i.e.* Indefatigable Island, were of extraordinary size and very thick. Since that time no one has found tortoises on Indefatigable, and it was supposed they had been exterminated. In 1901 R. H. Beck found a very young tortoise near the shore, and I specially urged him on his next trip in 1902 to leave no stone unturned to obtain specimens of an age fit to compare specifically. He, after a long and wearisome hunt, collected seven specimens, two alive and five dead, the latter including a very old *male* of gigantic size. However, the latter from old age had so rubbed and worn the edges of the carapace that I am forced to make the next largest the type of the description.

Testudo porteri sp. nov.

Nearest allied to *Testudo nigrita* Dum. & Bib., but at once distinguished from all other Galápagos species by its almost circular outline, the great convexity of its carapace, and the apparent shortness in a straight line, it being nearly as wide as it is long. A distinctive character also is the very large size of the marginal scutes. The circular outline and great convexity of the carapace give the latter the appearance of an irregular sphere cut in half. Total length over curve of carapace $51\frac{1}{2}$ in., total width 56 in.; height of carapace 25 in.; first marginal scute, width $7\frac{1}{4}$ in., length $4\frac{1}{4}$ in.; caudal scute, width 12 in., length $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.; supracaudal vertebral scute, width 15 in., length $9\frac{1}{4}$ in.; prennuchal vertebral scute, width 14 in., length 9 in.; first costal scute, width 13 inches, length $9\frac{3}{4}$ in.; second costal scute, width 16 in., length 8 in.; third costal scute, length 13 in., width $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.; fourth costal scute, length $10\frac{1}{2}$ in., width $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

The carapace of the type has the scutes very deeply striated, and the areolae very small. The large *male* measures over curve of carapace, length 58 in., width 64 in.

Hab. Indefatigable Island, Galápagos group.

Named in honour of Captain David Porter, of the U.S.A. frigate *Essex*, who first mentioned this species.

At the present time there are known to me eleven species of Gigantic Land-Tortoise from the Galápagos Archipelago, one not yet described, and the ten following: *Testudo elephantopus*, *T. nigrita*, *T. vicina*, *T. wallacei*, *T. porteri*, *T. microphyes*, *T. galapagoensis*, *T. ephippium*, *T. becki*, and *T. abingdoni*.

Since describing *Testudo becki* I have received, collected by R. H. Beck, five more specimens, and these show, not only that the species is really distinct from *T. ephippium*, but that it belongs to a different section, as it has the third cervical vertebra biconvex as in *T. galapagoensis*, not the fourth as in the rest of the Galápagan races.



Rothschild, Lionel Walter Rothschild. 1903. "Description of a new species of gigantic Land Tortoise from Indefatigable Island." *Novitates zoologicae : a journal of zoology in connection with the Tring Museum* 10, 119–119.

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