

Rhodin

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TERRAPIN FROM GRAND CAYMAN

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WHEN C. J. Maynard returned to Cambridge in 1877 from his first visit to the Cayman Islands, he brought news of the fact that there was a land, or fresh-water, turtle in the Islands, and Garman (Bull. Essex Institute, Vol. 20, 1888, p. 109) quotes him as saying, "A land or fresh-water turtle has been introduced into Cayman Brac, from Grand Cayman; and is called 'Hig-a-tee.'" Of course, these rumors of introduction in the West Indies may mean anything, or nothing, but the common name is arresting, because the country people throughout Cuba call terrapins by the name of Jicotea. The Spanish 'J,' of course, corresponds to 'H' in English. The Cayman name does seem like a corruption of the common Cuban name, unless it was an aboriginal Indian name which may have had a wide distribution.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, we know nothing of there having been any native Indians on these islands, and Hirst in his 'Notes on the History of the Cayman Islands' states that Grand Cayman was not inhabited before 1677 and Little Cayman and Cayman Brac but a few years earlier. In spite of the fact that the common name suggests the possibility of an introduction from Cuba,

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Gosse (Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica, 1851, p. 421) where 'Hicatee' is used for the introduced tortoise (*Testudo tabulata*); as also in Browne (Natural History of Jamaica, pt. 2, book 3, 1756, p. 466).

BARBOUR, T. 1941. Terrapin from Grand Cayman.



it is not likely that such an introduction from Cuba, or indeed from Jamaica either, could have taken place much before 1700. Of course, it is by no means impossible that differentiation may have taken place within this time, and we believe that it is worth emphasizing that the mere fact that this form may have jumped into being during the last couple of hundred years is no reason for not giving it a name if it can be told from its neighbors.

The senior author has visited Grand Cayman twice. Never for long enough to secure specimens, and no one has had the energy and intelligent curiosity to go there and get terrapins until Major Chapman Grant did so in 1938. During the summer of 1939 we received a letter from him, telling us of finding the animals on both the islands in question. He sent a drawing and asked that this be compared with Jamaican material, and, on the basis of the drawing alone, we wrote Major Grant that we were unable to make any differentiation and that we did not believe the turtles represented a new form.

Last winter the senior author visited the recently opened Zoological Park near Havana, and there was shown three turtles, which had been sent to the Havana Zoo by the meteorological observer stationed by the Cuban Government in Grand Cayman during the hurricane season. The Curator of the Zoo, Dr. Guillermo Aguayo, an old friend of ours, gave him a pair of specimens which he brought back alive as far as Gainesville, Florida.

In the meantime Major Chapman Grant had presented an adult pair and an immature individual from Grand Cayman, and a half-grown female from Cayman Brac, to the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy. After this opportunity to observe living material, as well as a number of preserved specimens, we have been forced to reconsider our decision, and it gives us pleasure to name the form for Major Grant, its discoverer.

It is obvious to all who are familiar with the hurricane charts of the West Indies, that Grand Cayman is in the



route not only of many hurricanes, but of a moderately steady ocean current which leads from Jamaica, and if turtles blow about during a hurricane, as some would have us believe, or if they float to sea, it would seem not impossible that they might reach the Islands from Jamaica by these causes. We confess ourselves extremely doubtful, and while the Cayman Islands support a number of other well differentiated species of reptiles, nevertheless human introduction cannot be lightly disregarded, or unnatural chance distribution.

In most respects our new form appears a little more like *P. felis*, from the Bahamas, than it does the Jamaican type. We say appears like, rather than related, advisedly, for similarity in these isolated small populations may be quite fortuitous.

The outline map presented herewith gives our present concept of the apparent affinities of the Antillean terrapins. More material, from more localities, may change these notions in detail, but we believe that the major implications are definitive.

The new form may be called *Pseudemys granti*.

### *Pseudemys granti* n. sp.

*Type.* Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, no. 46,045, a mature female, collected on Grand Cayman by Francisco Rodriguez Benitez.

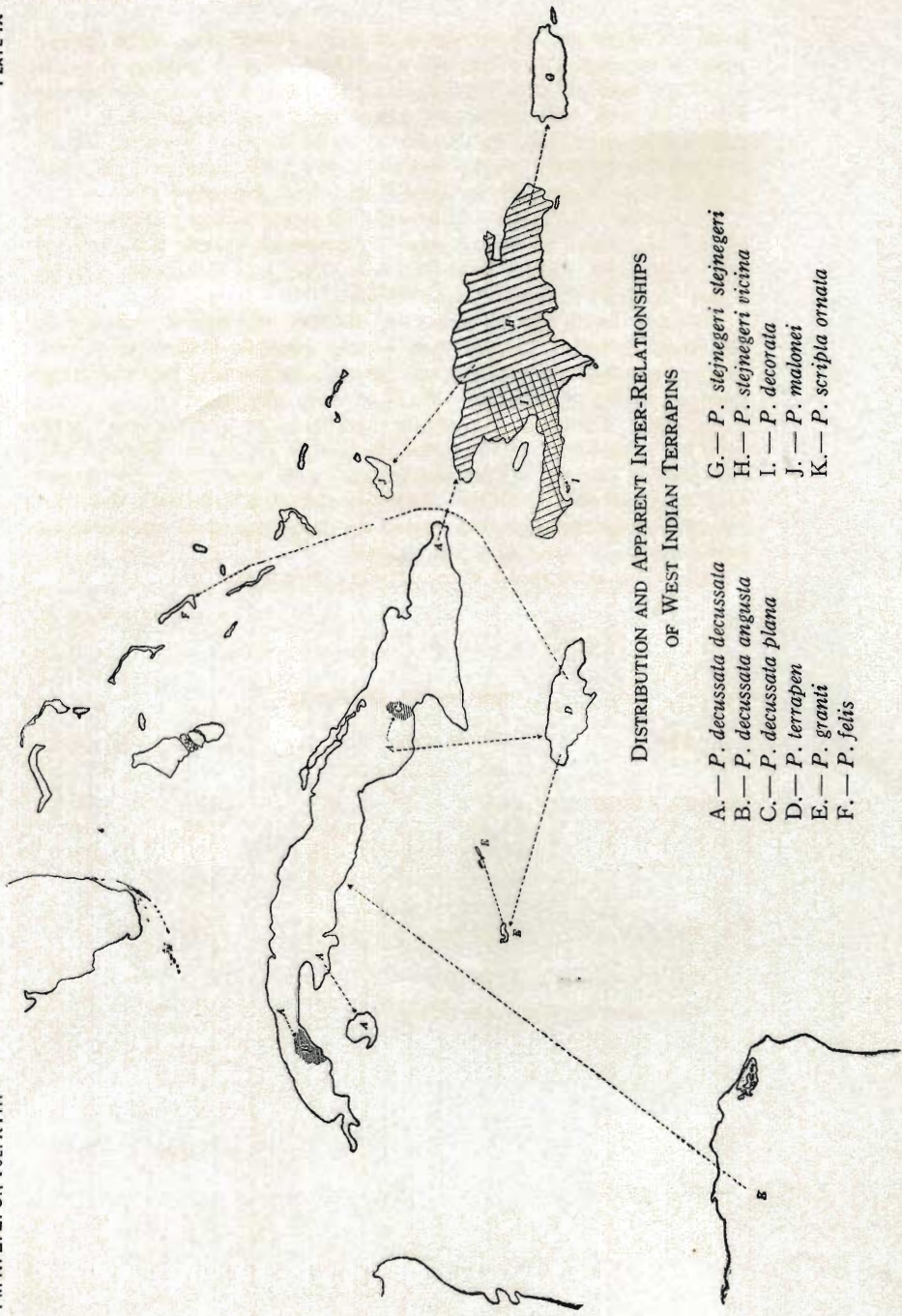
*Diagnosis.* The affinities of this form are evidently with the "terrapen sub-group," as defined by Barbour and Carr (1940).<sup>1</sup>

Morphologically this terrapin is most closely approached by the Cat Island form, *P. felis*, from which it may be distinguished as follows: Keel lacking from center of third vertebral anteriorly (more

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<sup>1</sup>Antillean terrapins. Mem. Mus. Comp. Zoöl., Vol. 54, no. 5.





DISTRIBUTION AND APPARENT INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF WEST INDIAN TERRAPINS