

A
HISTORY
OF
BRITISH ANIMALS,

EXHIBITING THE
DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERS AND SYSTEMATICAL
ARRANGEMENT

OF
THE GENERA AND SPECIES OF QUADRUPEDS, BIRDS,
REPTILES, FISHES, MOLLUSCA, AND RADIATA
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM;

INCLUDING
THE INDIGENOUS, EXTIRPATED, AND EXTINCT
KINDS, TOGETHER WITH PERIODICAL
AND OCCASIONAL VISITANTS.

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CHELONIA.

* STRAGGLERS.

GENUS CHELONA.—Lips corneous. Breast-plate interrupted by intervening cartilaginous spaces. Back-plate covered with corneous scales.

1. *Ch. imbricata*. Hawks-bill Tortoise.—Two claws on each hind-foot. Back-plate heart-shaped, the scales imbricated.

Testudo marina, *Sibb. Scot.* 13.—*T. caretta*, *Ray, Syn. Quad.* 258.—*T. imbricata*, *Linn. Syst. i.* 350. *Lacpede, Ovip. Quad.* (Trans. by Kerr, *Edin.* 1802.), i. 133. *Turton's Brit. Fauna*, 78.—A rare visitant.

This species, common in the American seas, can be viewed only as an accidental straggler, when appearing on our coasts. Sibbald, in his *Prodromus*, first noticed the occurrence; afterwards in his *Auctarium Musei Balfouriani*, p. 193, he adds, “*TESTUDO MARINA SQUAMOSA*. The Scalie *Sea-Tortoise*; the shell of it. The ANIMAL came in to ORKNEY, and this was sent to me from thence.” Low does not mention this notice of Sibbald, and appears not to have been aware even of the occasional visits of this animal to the coast. I have credible testimony of its having been taken at Papa Stour, one of the west Zetland Islands.

Dr Turton has recorded one instance of an individual, which, “in the spring of 1774, was taken in the Severn, and placed in the fish-ponds of the author's father, where it lived till winter.”

GENUS CORIUDO.—Back-plate coriaceous, ridged, and destitute of scales.

1. *C. coriacea*. Leathern Tortoise.—Breast-plate imperfect. Back-plate pointed behind, with five longitudinal ridges.

T. cor. Borlase, Corn. 285. tab. xxvii. f. 4. *Linn. Syst. i.* 350. *Penn. Brit. Zool.* iii. 7. *Lac. Ov. Quad.* i. 146.—South coast of England.

Two instances of the occurrence of this species, on the coast of Cornwall, in July 1756, are mentioned by Borlase.

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The geographical limits of marine animals are too imperfectly known, to enable the naturalist to determine the true character of those occasional visitants. Uncommonly warm seasons, the more or less abundant supply of food, or the prevalence of storms, may bring to our shores the tortoises and other animals of more southern seas, without enabling us to claim them as natives. The tortoises do not lay their eggs in such high latitudes, nor is it probable, that, unless by accident, they would ever visit us. They can execute extensive migrations, and practise abstinence, otherwise, instead of occurring in a live state, they would be cast up a putrid mass on the shores. Examples may occur likewise, of such as may have escaped from wrecked vessels. Taking these circumstances in connection, it is probable that the *Ch. caouana*, or Logger-headed Tortoise, common in the Mediterranean, and the

Ch. Mydas or Green Tortoise, may, like the two species noticed above, be yet enumerated among our accidental visitants. Neither is it improbable that the relics of the Mud Tortoise and Round Tortoise, both European species, may occur in some of the older members of the "modern strata" in the southern parts of the island.

** EXTINCT SPECIES.

The tortoises of this division appear, from the relics of marine animals, with which they are associated in the different strata, to have been inhabitants of the sea. Baron Cuvier, however, ranks two of our extinct species in his section, "Des Emydes ou Tortues d'eau douce." It is probable that the relics, from the following localities, belong to different species, though the distinguishing characters of these may not, as yet, be sufficiently determined.

1. The strata in the Isle of Sheppey (Geol. Trans. ii. 205.), regarded as analogous to the "London clay," contain the remains of a tortoise, which Cuvier considers as approaching, in some of its characters, to his *Emys expansa*, (Recherches sur les Ossemens Fossiles, v. p. 2, 234. tab. xv. f. 12.) He is disposed to refer to this extinct species of Sheppey the one noticed by Mr Parkinson, Org. Rem. iii. tab. xviii. f. 2. This last author delineates the head of another tortoise from the same place, ib. f. 3.; concerning the relations of which Baron Cuvier offers no remark.

2. A species of tortoise was found by Mr Mantell in the iron sand-beds of Tilgate Forest (*Emydis des sable ferrugineux du Comté de Sussex*, Rech. Os. Foss. v. 2. p. 232.) Baron Cuvier thinks that it bears a near resemblance to the remains of a species found by Professor Hugi of Soleure, in the Jura limestone, on the left bank of the Aar.

3. The argillaceous limestones, termed Purbeck beds, and which belong to the upper division of the oolitic series, furnish bones, and even nearly complete specimens of fossil turtles.—Geol. of England and Wales, p. 172.

4. In the Stonesfield slate, referred to the lower division of the Oolitic series, remains of two or three species of tortoises occur.—Geol. Eng. and Wales, p. 208.

5. The Lias has furnished bones and palates of a species of turtle.—Geol. Eng. and Wales, p. 267.

SAURIA.

GEN. I. LACERTA. LIZARD.—Tongue bifid. Palate and jaws with teeth. Five toes, with nails on each foot.

1. *L. agilis*. Nimble Lizard.—Back with dark bands. Tail annulated with sharp scales.

L. flavi coloris, Sibb. Scot. 13.—*L. vulgaris*, Ray, Quad. 264.—*L. agilis*, Linn. Syst. i. 363.—Scaly Lizard, Penn. Brit. Zool. iii. 21.—*S.* Man-keeper; *G.* Dearc luachair.—In warm sandy situations.