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HERPETOLOGICAL MISCELLANEA

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IV. — A NEW SWAMP TORTOISE  
FROM THE SWAN RIVER DISTRICT

Up to 1953 only one species of fresh-water tortoise was definitely known to occur in South-western Australia, the Long-necked Tortoise, *Chelodina oblonga*. When, therefore, at the Wild Life Show of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club in September 1953 Mr. R. Boyd exhibited a locally taken specimen of a shorter-necked tortoise considerable interest was aroused. Close examination revealed that this tortoise was not referable to any known species and efforts were made to procure additional material. A second specimen was finally obtained in the same locality.

The new species is an ally of a common tortoise in south-eastern and northern Australia and it is rather remarkable that so large a creature should have been overlooked for so many years. Its discovery should encourage the search for still other representatives of eastern States faunas that might linger in the South-west, and the recent similar finds of Bassian fish species, such as *Galaxias truttaceus* and *G. pusilla*, suggest that some of these forms might survive in refuges of very limited area.

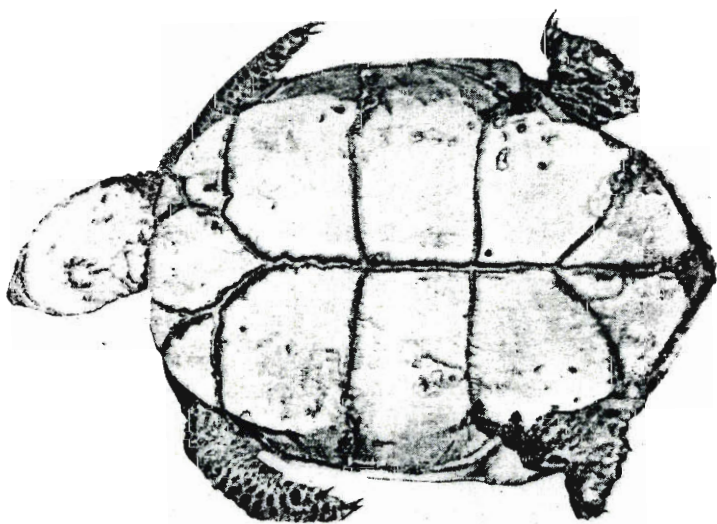
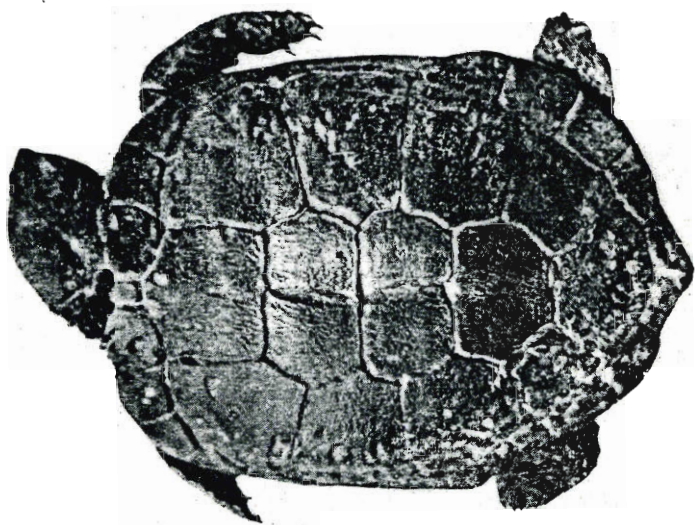
The species is characterised as follows:

*Emydura inspectata* sp. nov.

Specimen R 11092: Carapace slightly depressed, broadly oval (133 x 103 mm.), slightly narrower in front (96) with a distinct sulcus; nuchal very small (9 x 5) entirely free below; fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth marginals with distinct flange, fourth to seventh narrowest. First vertebral largest, as wide as long, obtusely pointed in front; second and third much wider than long, shorter than the adjacent costals; fourth and fifth slightly wider than long, longer than the second and third. Plastron (124 x 95), measured to the edge of the bridge) flat, large, almost as wide as the carapace, semicircular in front, narrower behind with a broad straight-sided anal notch; bridge rounded, one-third the

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new swamp tortoise from the Swan River District



*Emydura inspectata* sp. nov. Upper and lower views of specimen R11092; about three-fifths natural size.

length of the plastron, measured along the middle line. Intergular very large (29.5 x 25.5) widely in contact with the pectorals; gulars very small, widely separated; humerals triangular, slightly narrower than the intergular; pectorals slightly shorter than the femorals, suture between the latter shorter than that between the anals, latter forming a broad, shallow notch behind. Head broad and flat (54 x 27), rugulose above, snout projecting, interorbital space twice the width of the symphysis, the latter equal to the vertical diameter of the orbit. Neck above and laterally with pronounced conical tubercles, temporal region, chin and throat reticulate. Two small barbels. Fore-limbs with three series of transverse lamellae and a flap of three or four enlarged scales. Tail very short, hardly projecting. Colour of carapace bone-brown; head above dark-olive, sides of face, lower lip, chin and throat, marguerite yellow; a few dark markings on the throat; fore-limbs olive-black, hind-limbs darker; plastron buffy-olive, over the sutures of the bones buff.

Specimen R 11093: This smaller, younger individual, with the carapace measuring 98 x 83 mm. and the plastron 88 x 76 mm., shows all the characteristics described above though the bridge is angular not rounded. The coloration of the carapace is a brighter brown and the plastron has the plates edged with brownish black as is usual in the young of *Emydura*. As in the larger specimen the yellow streak along the sides of the face so characteristic of the other species, is lacking.

This new species differs from *E. macquaria*, occurring from the Kimberley District to Victoria and South Australia, in the shape of the carapace, the greater width of the plastron, the unusually large intergular and in the fact that the nuchal is entirely free below. These features also separate it from other species known to occur in northern Australia and Indonesia.

The type, R 11092, was collected in July, 1953, at Warbrook, about 24 miles north of Perth, by Mr. A. Gates, who found it crossing the road in sub-swampy country between the railway line and the Great Northern Highway. It was kept in captivity for nine months by Mr. R. Boyd and then presented by him to the W.A. Museum. The second specimen, R 11093, was also found by Mr. Gates in the same general locality and in similar circumstances in April, 1954.

I am indebted to Mr. J. C. Battersby for sending me drawings of the carapace and plastron of the type of *Emydura australis* (Gray) in the British Museum of Natural History, and to Messrs. H. M. Hale, Director of the South Australian Museum, and C. W. Brazenor, Assistant Director of the National Museum of Victoria for permission to examine and compare specimens in their Museums. Also to Mr. H. Butler for the photographs illustrating this communication.