

IX.—*On the Species of Chelymys from Australia, with the Description of a new Species.* By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S.

IN establishing this genus, the only species then known had a distinct nuchal plate, and the existence of this plate is made part of the generic character. We have since received two specimens of the shell of a Tortoise, without the animals, which has all the other characters and appearance of the genus, but is destitute of the nuchal shield; so I am inclined to amend the generic characters by leaving out this particular, and to use the presence or non-existence of the nuchal shield as a sectional or specific character; and we have received other specimens of the species with the nuchal shield, which have further illustrated the species, and show that this shield is always present in it.

The species will then stand thus:—

\* *Nuchal shield broad and well developed; hinder margin entire.*

1. *Chelymys Macquaria*, Gray, Cat. Shield Reptiles, 57.

This animal presents two varieties, differing in the height of the back and the width of the hinder marginal shields. Specimens brought by the same collectors, probably from the same locality, offer considerable variation in this respect, and appear to form a series of gradations from one variety to the other. The higher and more solid specimens are of the smallest size; but we have very depressed broad margins in the young specimens as well as the more adult ones, the latter being twice the size.

The solid, higher varieties may be only of different sexes, or they may even prove to be species when more is known of their habitation and habits; indeed I should be inclined to consider them so now if we had not received both varieties from Capt. W. Chambers and Mr. Cuming as coming from the same locality.

They vary considerably in the form of the gular shield: in the small, solid, high-shelled variety it is broad and short; in some of the older of the larger depressed specimens it is equally short and broad; in the younger depressed specimens it is narrow, linear elongate.

\*\* *Nuchal shield none; hinder margin dentated.*

2. *Chelymys dentata*.

Shell ovate, wider behind; hinder margin dentated; side edge revolute. Nuchal shield none. Back with a slight nodule at the hinder part of the vertebral shields. The first vertebral shield broader than long, the rest longer than broad; the fourth the longest, rather urn-shaped, the margin shelving.

Younger shell: back slightly keeled; the margin more ex-

panded, nearly horizontal; the vertebral plates broader than long, the fourth the largest, with five even sides.

*Hab.* N. Australia; Upper Victoria, in Beagle's Valley. (Mr. Macgillivray.)

“Native name, ‘Billymurry.’ It was caught with grasshoppers, and the stomach contained *Pandanus*-seeds.”

The gular shield in both the specimens is narrow, elongate, extending down between the front edge of the second pair of sternal shields.

This species is at once known from the former by the form of the nodulose keel on the vertebral plates, and by the dentated hinder margin, as well as by the absence of the nuchal shield.

X.—Notice of a new Species of Pelomedusa from Natal.

By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S. &c.

HITHERTO there have been only two species of *Pelomedusa* recorded—one from the Cape of Good Hope, which has been long known, and the other from Abyssinia, where it was discovered by Dr. Edward Rüppell; and they are so distinct from one another in the form of the ventral shield that each has been considered the type of a distinct subgenus, viz. *Pentonyx* and *Pelomedusa*. The British Museum received from Mr. Sargeant, the Commissioner for Natal in the International Exhibition, two specimens of the genus from Natal. They belong to the same subgenus, and are very like the species from the Cape; yet they seem to offer characters which mark them as distinct species, or at least very distinct local varieties.

In the Cape species, or *Pelomedusa subrufa*, the head is moderate (but they seem to vary in its size, perhaps in the two sexes), and there are only a few small scales between the hinder outer edge of the crown-shield and the upper edge of the temple-shield, and the front one of these scales is over the middle of the temple-shield.

In the Natal species, which may be called *Pelomedusa nigra*, the head is larger and more depressed, and there are several scales between the outer hinder edge of the crown-shield and the temple-shield; and the front scale of the series is narrow, and in the front part of the suture near the orbit which separates these two shields.

When I published the ‘Catalogue of the Shield Reptiles,’ (1855, p. 53), I separated a specimen which I had obtained from Mr. Warwick, as a variety of *P. subrufa*, thus: “Black, grey-spotted; shields all with close, rather granular, radiating ridges and concentric grooves; areola small.” I am now in-