

## Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Seidel, Michael E. 1988. *Trachemys terrapen*.

***Trachemys terrapen* (Lacépède)  
Jamaican Slider**

*Testudo terrapen* Lacépède, 1788:129. Type-locality, "Jamaica."

Holotype not designated.

*Testudo palustris* Gmelin, 1789:1041. Type-locality "Jamaica."

Holotype not designated.

*Testudo fasciata*: Suckow, 1798:40. Type-locality, "Amboina and Virginia," revised by Seidel (1988) to "Jamaica." Holotype not designated.

*Testudo rugosa* Shaw, 1802:28. Type-locality, unknown. See Comment.

*Emys rugosa livida*: Gray, 1831:30.

*Emys decussata*: Gosse, 1851:187.

*Emys rugosa*: Gosse, 1851:189.

*Chrysemys scripta rugosa*: Boulenger, 1889:79.

*Trachemys palustris*: Baur, 1893:776.

*Chrysemys scripta palustris*: Siebenrock, 1909:464.

*Pseudemys palustris*: Stejneger, 1904:710.

*Pseudemys felis* Barbour, 1935:205. Type-locality, "Tea Bay, Cat Island, Bahamas." Holotype, Mus. Comp. Zool., Harvard 38385, an adult female, collected by Wilton G. Albury and Charles S. Dooley, January 1935 (examined by author).

*Pseudemys palustris felis*: Mertens, 1939:39.

*Pseudemys terrapen*: Barbour and Carr, 1940:391.

*Pseudemys terrapen terrapen*: Mertens and Wermuth, 1955:366.

*Pseudemys terrapen felis*: Parsons, 1960:118.

*Chrysemys terrapen*: McDowell, 1964:274.

*Chrysemys felis*: Schwartz, 1968:259.

*Chrysemys decussata felis*: Schwartz, 1968:259.

*Chrysemys terrapin*: Auffenberg, 1974:134. Lapsus.

*Chrysemys terrapen terrapen*: Obst, 1983:23.

*Chrysemys terrapen felis*: Obst, 1983:23.

*Trachemys terrapen*: Seidel and Inchaústegui, 1984:468. First use of combination.

*Trachemys terrapen felis*: Iverson, 1985:5.

*Trachemys terrapen terrapen*: Iverson, 1985:5.

*Trachemys felis*: Seidel and Adkins, 1987:485.

• **Content.** The species is monotypic.

• **Definition and Diagnosis.** A moderate-sized species of *Trachemys*, males are 100-200 mm in carapace length and females 110-270 mm. The adult carapace is uniform brown or olive, weakly keeled with longitudinal ridges or rugosities at the base of each

pleural, and has serrated posterior marginals. In juveniles and some young adults, the pleurals scutes have a dark spot encircled by a yellow or orange ring and a similar ocellate figure overlapping the seam between each pair of marginals. The adult plastron is usually plain yellow or light tan, but in juveniles there may be evidence of an interrupted figure, especially on the gular scutes. The undersides of marginals at the bridge area have a faded ocellate figure overlapping the seams. The skin is gray or grayish-brown with relatively few markings in adults, other than four pale yellow stripes along the underside of the neck and chin, and two weakly defined light bands on the forelegs. In juveniles, additional yellow stripes along the lateral portions of the head and hindlimbs may be present, including a supratemporal stripe which is occasionally orange. All markings fade or disappear with age, sometimes within the 2nd or 3rd year (except for populations in western Jamaica). The tomium is smooth or slightly serrate and the median ridge of the alveolar surface is weakly developed. The snout of mature males is relatively short, and melanism is not pronounced in older individuals. *T. terrapen* is distinguished from all other species of *Trachemys* by the following characteristics: carapace flared posteriorly, width at maginal VII-VIII seam usually greater than 76% of carapace length; dorsal length of cervical scute usually more than 7% of carapace length; ventral underlap of cervical scute typically broad, greater than 4% of carapace length; anterior width of the plastron (at gular-humoral seam) more than 23% of carapace length; plastral scutes with concentrations of black pigment along the borders of seams.

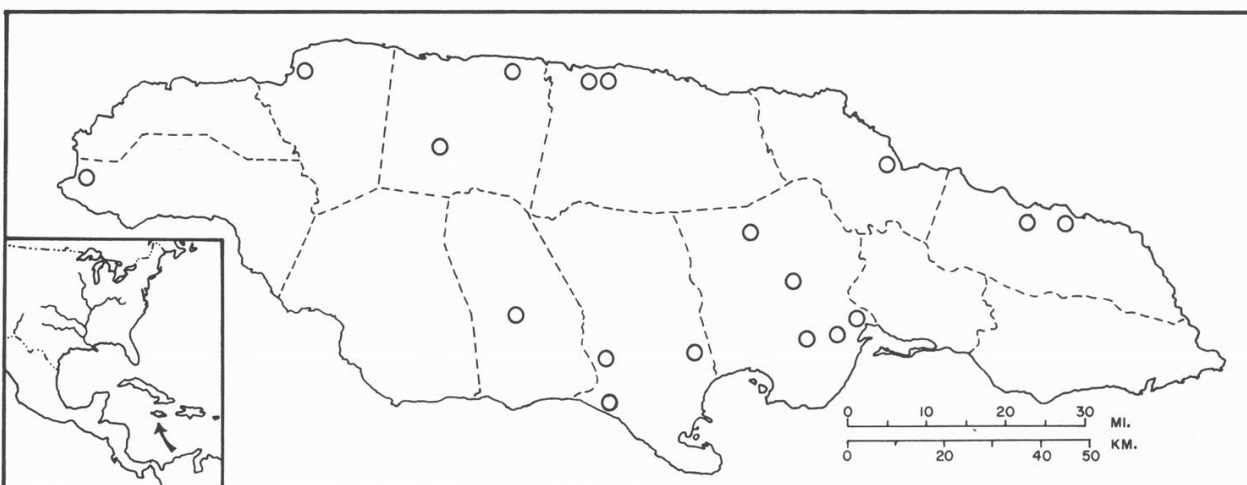
• **Descriptions.** General descriptions are in Lynn and Grant (1940), Barbour and Carr (1940), Pritchard (1979), and Seidel (1988).

• **Illustrations.** Color photographs or drawings are in Barbour and Carr (1940) and Pritchard (1979). Black and white photographs or drawings are found in Wermuth and Mertens (1961) and Seidel (1988). Bones of the pectoral girdle and limbs are illustrated in Auffenberg (1974) and Mlynarski (1976). Illustrations of the skull appear in Wermuth and Mertens (1961) and Seidel (1988).

• **Distribution.** *Trachemys terrapen* is widely distributed on Jamaica. Populations in the northern Bahamas on Cat Island, Eleuthera, and possibly Andros Island are apparently the result of human introduction (Seidel, 1988).

• **Fossil Record.** No fossils have been identified, but Seidel (1988, Pregill pers. comm.) refers to a late Pleistocene fossil from San Salvador, Bahamas which may be *T. terrapen*.

• **Pertinent Literature.** General accounts are in Barbour and Carr (1940), Lynn and Grant (1940), and Pritchard (1979). Additional references are listed by topic: Taxonomy: Williams (1956), McDow-



**Map.** Circles indicate known localities. Type locality is too imprecise to plot.

ell (1964), Seidel and Smith (1986), Seidel and Adkins (1987), and Seidel (1988). Karyotype: Bickham and Baker (1976) and Bickham and Carr (1983). Electrophoresis: Seidel and Adkins (1987). Distribution: Barbour (1935), Schwartz and Henderson (1985), Iverson (1986), and Seidel (1988). Zoogeography and evolution: Barbour and Carr (1941) and Seidel (1988). Choanal structure: Parsons (1968). Feeding and reproductive habits: Barbour and Shreve (1935), Lynn and Grant (1940), Hodsdon and Pearson (1943), and Groombridge (1982).

• **Etymology.** The name *terrapen* derives from the New Latin *terrapene* (of Indian origin) for turtle.

• **Comment.** The identity of Shaw's (1802) *Testudo rugosa* remains questionable. Although no type specimen or locality was designated in the original description, Barbour and Carr (1940) included *T. rugosa* in the synonymy of *T. terrapen* based on photographs of the purported type specimen (adult melanistic male, shell only, collection of the Royal College of Surgeons, London, No. 990, presumed lost in 1941). Mittleman (1947), based exclusively on data published by Shaw (1802) and Barbour and Carr (1940), concluded that Shaw's *T. rugosa* was the Cuban form, *T. decussata*. Shaw (1802) illustrated the type specimen (shell) in dorsal view only, and most of the characters which distinguish *T. decussata* from *T. terrapen* (Seidel, 1988) cannot be determined.

Populations of *Trachemys* in the northern Bahamas have frequently been assigned to the species or subspecies *felis*. However Seidel (1988) and Seidel and Adkins (1987) presented morphological and biochemical evidence that these populations are referable to *T. terrapen*. Putative hybrid *Trachemys* in artificial ponds on Hog Cay (Paradise Island), New Providence, have been recognized as a composite of human introductions from other West Indian islands and perhaps the United States (Campbell, 1978; Groombridge, 1982). Biochemical evidence (Seidel and Adkins, 1987) supports the theory that these turtles are a *T. stejnegeri* x *terrapen* hybrid swarm, probably due to importations from Great Inagua and Cat Island.

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