

Maximum Size of the Egyptian Tortoise, *Testudo kleinmanni*

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Despite its recent transfer from Appendix II to Appendix I of CITES (Pritchard, 1995), *Testudo kleinmanni* continues to be traded illegally. On 7 April 1995 some passengers arriving from Cairo were intercepted at Ferihegy Airport, Budapest, Hungary, with six Egyptian tortoises concealed in their luggage. The animals were confiscated by customs and conservation officials and were transferred to the Zoological and Botanical Garden, Budapest. Three of them died within two months and were subsequently deposited at the Hungarian Natural History Museum (HNHM). One female in this series (shell and skull in dry collection, all other parts preserved in fluid [HNHM s/n: presently labeled BLF 570.1]) surpasses by nearly 12 mm the maximum carapace length of 132.3 mm, the previously reported maximum size for this species (Farkas, 1993). Its dimensions are (all straight-line measurements taken with vernier calipers): maximum carapace length, 144.2 mm; median carapace length, 137.7 mm; maximum carapace width, 97.8 mm; maximum plastron length, 122.3 mm; maximum shell height, 70.8 mm (see Fig. 1).

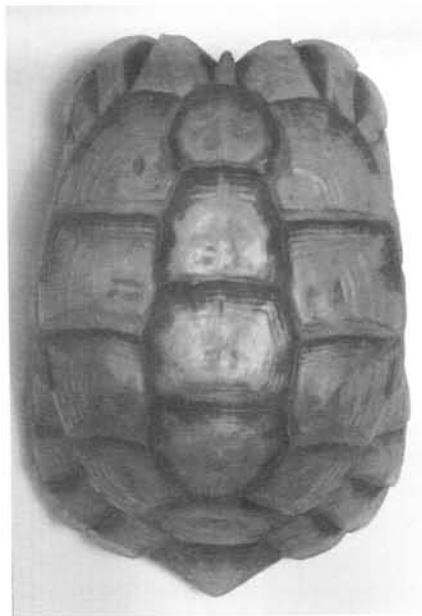


Figure 1. Record-sized female specimen of *Testudo kleinmanni*.

The tortoises were probably Libyan in origin, though sold in Cairo. Even though *T. kleinmanni* has long been protected by law in Egypt (Buskirk, 1985) and may in fact be virtually extirpated there (Baha el Din, 1994), dozens of additional tortoises were seen by us displayed in bird cages in small pet shops in Giza.

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New Locality Records for Freshwater Turtles from the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico

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The chelonian fauna of the Yucatán Peninsula remains imperfectly known (Smith and Smith, 1979; Lee, 1980; Dundee et al., 1986). Through the works of Iverson (1988, 1992) several new localities for the eleven native non-marine taxa have been documented. New localities for *Kinosternon creaseri*, *Staurotypus triporcatus*, and *Rhinoclemmys areolata* are presented below.

Creaser's Mud Turtle, Kinosternon creaseri. — Considerable habitat information on the peninsula's three species of *Kinosternon* was provided by Iverson (1988), who focused on the distribution and natural history of the only endemic Yucatán kinosternid, *K. creaseri*. Iverson concluded that this least known chelonian may be the peninsula's most abundant turtle. Primarily an inhabitant of "shallow, temporary pools in undisturbed forest," *K. creaseri* was recorded from 38 new localities, all within the known range, bringing the total number of known sites to 56 (Iverson, 1988).



Figure 1. Map of the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico, showing localities discussed in text.

On 22 November 1992 I photographed a juvenile *K. creaseri* in Santa Elena, Yucatán (Fig. 1). It had been collected near the town center two months earlier by a local inhabitant following a rainstorm, and its identification was verified by John Iverson. This specimen represents the westernmost record for the state of Yucatán, a range extension of 112 km southwest of Libre Union (CU 29194) and 100 km north of Dzibalchen, Campeche (KU 75644). The presence of this species in southwestern Yucatán is of interest in view of Iverson's speculation that *K. creaseri* may be unable to survive in the relatively dry and deforested northwestern portion of the peninsula.

Mexican Giant Musk Turtle, *Staurotypus triporcatus*. — The previous northernmost record for *S. triporcatus* (designated as uncertain by Iverson, 1992) was 13 km south of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo, Mexico. Consisting of a cracked shell 233 mm in length, this specimen was found in a marsh adjacent to a laguna beside Highway 307; Iverson speculated that the specimen might have been hit by a car and crawled into the marsh, where it died. The only confirmed record of *S. triporcatus* from Quintana Roo is from the Hondo River on the Belizean border, 6 km northeast of La Union town (Bahena-Basave, 1995b).

On 31 July 1993 a female *S. triporcatus*, measuring 310 mm carapace length, was captured approximately 15 m from shore on the surface of the northwest part of Laguna de Bacalar, 2 km north of Balneario Buena Vista, Quintana Roo, Mexico. The species is well known as *gauu* to the local inhabitants with whom I was sharing a small boat. The turtle was released after being photographed. Later, in a community museum in Valle

Hermoso, Quintana Roo (approximately 60 km northwest of Balneario Buena Vista), I photographed the skull and partially desquamated carapace of a smaller *S. triporcatus*, said to have been locally captured. Townspeople did not consider the species rare, and like those at Laguna Bacalar, declared that it was legally protected from commercial exploitation in Quintana Roo. Both specimens represent the first records of *S. triporcatus* from the interior of Quintana Roo, extending the range 120 km and 135 km northeast of La Union, respectively.

Furrowed Wood Turtle, *Rhinoclemmys areolata*. — This semi-terrestrial batagurine is known from many localities in the Yucatán Peninsula (Iverson, 1992). A juvenile *R. areolata* (CL 120 mm) was found on 27 July 1993 during a light rain on the road just south of San Felipe, Yucatán, Mexico. I also saw a fresh DOR *R. areolata* on this highway, the northernmost recorded peninsula locality (Iverson, 1992).

Other Species. — Virtually all persons questioned concerning freshwater turtles gave cogent references to the presence of *Dermatemys mawii* (*tortuga* or *tortuga blanca*) as another locally exploited, but protected species. Documentation of the protected status of this or other chelonian species in Quintana Roo was not available. *Dermatemys* has been recorded from Quintana Roo only from the border with Belize in the extreme south (Bahena-Basave, 1995a). A good description of *Claudius angustatus* (unknown from Quintana Roo) was made by a rural resident near Valle Hermoso, who recalled finding a large-headed, diminutive turtle with three maxillary cusps, which distinguish this turtle from juvenile *Staurotypus*.

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