



A Schooling of Leatherback Turtles, *Dermochelys coriacea coriacea*, on the Texas Coast

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guish no chitinous fragments of insects or other arthropods.

Lialis jicari was observed only during fire drives. Since the pupil of its eye is vertically elliptical by day and rounded at dusk, I presume the lizard is crepuscular or nocturnal like its congener.—WILFRED T. NEILL, *Research Division, Ross Allen Reptile Institute, Silver Springs, Florida.*

A SCHOOLING OF LEATHERBACK TURTLES, *DERMOCHELVYS CORIACEA CORIACEA*, ON THE TEXAS COAST. A concentration of leatherback turtles, *Dermochelys coriacea coriacea* Linnaeus, was observed in the Gulf surf along a thirty mile line extending north from Port Aransas, Texas. An estimated 100 individuals were seen throughout the area and were approximately 75 yards from the beach. Observations and identification were made from a low flying airplane on December 17, 1956.

An extremely dense school of the cabbage head, *Stomolophus meleagris* L. Agassiz, extended through the same area, and the turtles were most numerous where these jellyfish were most dense. No turtles were observed on the beach. No attempt was made to locate nests or to collect specimens due to bad weather which closed in shortly after the turtles were located. The beach along this area is a deserted one and is formed by St. Joseph and Matagorda Islands.

All leatherbacks observed ranged in carapace length from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 feet.—TERRANCE R. LEARY, *Texas Game and Fish Commission, Rockport, Texas.*

OBSERVATIONS ON MATING IN THE CORN SNAKE, *ELAPHE GUTTATA GUTTATA*.—Courtship and mating behavior in two captive corn snakes collected in the Florida Everglades are reported. The observations were made at Dayton, Ohio.

A female (1087 mm. in snout-vent length) and male (962 mm.) were received in May, 1955. They were placed together on May 26, 1955 (8:30 PM) and a few moments later courtship began. Copulation occurred then and again the next day.

The male placed his ventral surface along the dorsal surface of the female with his head near hers. As she moved about the cage, her forward movement seemed to excite him. Although her movements were quick and deliberate, he maintained his position. He moved his body into numerous undulating curves that followed the contour of her body. At the same time his lower sides twitched along their full length. Ripples in this region were numerous and fast and, along with a jerky movement of the entire body, seemed to form the preliminary courtship.

The male moved his body forward along the back of the female, and as he did so she became more active. He moved his tail posteriorly along the lower one-fourth of her body. With a sudden jerk, his tail entwined hers and the hemipenis was inserted. After union was effected the male again aligned his body with that of the female. The hindquarters of both snakes, from slightly anterior to the anus to the tip of the tail, were occasionally elevated and then slowly lowered. The animals were moved around by hand for photographic purposes, but copulation continued. Copulation occurred again in the morning and afternoon of the second day, lasting fourteen and nine minutes, respectively. Each of the three observed meetings was less vigorous than the preceding one.

On July 2, 1955, the female laid eleven eggs, approximately 32 mm. long, which were confined between a few coils of her body. Eight of the eggs adhered and three were unattached. Three of the eggs were found hatching on August 29. On August 30, one hatchling emerged in the morning and a second in the afternoon. The third emerged on September 1. It had a swelling which started a little anterior to the anus and extended for one-half the tail length. This deformity may have been due to suboptimal moisture conditions (Lynn and Ullrich, 1950, *COPEIA*, 4: 253-62). Two of the remaining eight eggs were infertile. None of the other six eggs hatched and were discarded. The period of gestation was 37 days and the incubation period was 59 days.

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A LARGE SPINY SOFTSHELLED TURTLE.—What apparently is the largest spiny soft-shelled turtle, *Trionyx spiniferus*, yet reported was added to the University of Minnesota's collections (No. 1494) recently. The specimen was taken July 23, 1956, in Swan Lake in Meeker County, Minnesota, by Mr. Paul Mertins of Waterville, Minnesota. Swan Lake connects with the Mississippi River through the Crow River system. Sometime later, the turtle was sold to Mr. Arthur Kurtz, a commercial turtle dealer in Minneapolis. He, in turn, reported the specimen to me and it was purchased from him for the University collection. The specimen measured 18 in. in carapace length, 13 in. in carapace width, and weighed 17 lbs. 6 oz. after at least 4 months without food.—W. J. BRECKENRIDGE, *Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.*