

# Emys Conservation

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## *Lettre n°22*

### SOMMAIRE

EDITORIAL .....	page 2
EDITOR'S CORNER .....	page 3
JOURNEES TECHNIQUES CISTUDE, 4 ET 5 FEVRIER 2015 EN ALSACE.....	page 4
QUELQUES IMAGES DE CES JOURNÉES.....	pages 5 et 6
COMPÉTITION ENTRE <i>EMYS MARMORATA</i> ET <i>TRACHEMYS SCRIPTA ELEGANS</i> .....	page 7
LA TORTUE À RESPIRATION CLOACALE MENACÉE D'EXTINCTION .....	page 8
SAISIE DE 170 TORTUES RAYONNÉES DE MADACASCAR À L'AÉROPORT CDG.....	page 9
TRANSMISSION DE PARASITES MORTELS DE LA <i>T.S.E</i> À LA CISTUDE.....	page 10
L'IMPACT NÉGATIF DES INVASIONS DE JUVÉNILES <i>T.S.E</i> SUR LA CROISSANCE DES JUVÉNILES DES TORTUES LOCALES.....	page 11
VISITE DE TERRAIN : LA TORTUE PONCTUÉE ( <i>CLEMMYS GUTTATA</i> ).....	page 12
NEW PUBLICATION AND TURTLE OBJECTS.....	page 13
HARMLESS ?... RACINE... PUBLICITY.....	pages 14, 15 et 16
EDITORIAL POLICY.....	page 17

**Chers collègues et amis,**

Les 4<sup>ème</sup> Journées Techniques Cistude se sont tenues à Strasbourg le 4 et 5 février 2015. Je n'en ai encore manqué aucune... Elles se sont déroulées à l'Hôtel, du Département (67), dans le quartier historique, nous sommes accueillis par Fredy Zimmerman, président de la Commission Environnement du Conseil Général, puis par André Miquet responsable du Groupe Cistude de la SHF, qui développe sur la fin du PNA Cistudes, en 2015.

Des communications fort pertinentes sur la gestion des milieux en étudiant les flux migratoires (Jean-Yves Georges en Hérault) ou génétiques (Sébastien Ficheux en Camargue) ou les comportements (Jean-Yves Georges en Alsace) et puis tout le travail de nos amis alsaciens pour la restauration d'un espace naturel sensible, le site de la Woerr afin d'y introduire une *Emys orbicularis* d'élevage : détection par ADN environnemental en Bourgogne (Rémi Wattier), les ressources alimentaires comme la biomasse (Corinne Grac), les moules zébrées, mais aussi la discussion sur les protocoles d'introduction ou réintroduction (Jean-Yves Georges) et les travaux sur le site (Sébastien Kern).

Les questions d'élevage ont été abordées à la fin de cette 1<sup>ère</sup> journée au Zoodyssée (Pierre-Jean Albaret), au zoo de Mulhouse (Benoit Quintard) et enfin, un Web documentaire (Christophe Coïc) sur le Plan Régional d'Action d'Aquitaine ou les outils pédagogiques pour les Marais de Brouage par Cyril ou en posters, ceux de nos amis corses (les photos suivent).

Excellente choucroute dans un restaurant spécialisé, le soir, et retrouvaille avec nos amis suisses et Verena Lacoste. Le lendemain, 5 février, se sont tenues les tables rondes et synthèses, puis la visite du site de la Woerr dans l'après-midi, tout au Nord-Est de l'Alsace, au bord du Rhin, site partagé avec l'Allemagne, car nous savions dès le départ de ce projet, que la cistude d'Europe n'a pas de frontières.

Petite transition pour aborder le 5<sup>ème</sup> Symposium européen à Kiten en Bulgarie sur les bords de la Mer Noire, les 19, 20 et 21 août 2015

<http://www.faunacarpatica.sk/emys-orbicularis-symposium/transit.html>.

Donc, 10 ans de silence pour ces symposiums qui avaient fonctionné régulièrement avant : 1996, Dresden (Allemagne), 1999, Le Blanc (France), 2002, Kosice (Slovaquie), 2005, Valentia (Espagne). Rien n'est simple dans l'organisation de ces rencontres et nous ne pouvons que féliciter ceux qui se lancent dans cette aventure et les soutenir. D'autant que nous allons y retrouver nos amis d'Europe de l'Est, leurs activités, leurs travaux dont nous ne savions plus rien, depuis Valencia.

Rien n'est simple aussi pour les français qui envisagent de s'y rendre. Nos traditions de congé en août, en famille, nos dispositions de voyages longtemps à l'avance car c'est cher l'été, n'aident pas. De la nécessité de revendiquer, à l'image des journées techniques, un coût réduit pour l'inscription, l'hébergement, la restauration. Le billet d'avion de Paris c'est déjà 425 Euros... J'ai donc pris la décision de m'y rendre et de vous rendre compte, comme d'habitude. Je ne resterai pas à Kiten, j'aurai profité de Minorque avant, je m'y rendrai avec mon poster réactualisé sur l'île. J'espère seulement que la délégation française composée de deux personnes à cette étape, va s'étoffer. Bonne lecture !

Alain Veysset, rédacteur

**Dear Colleagues and Friends,**

The French 4<sup>th</sup> Technical Days on *Emys orbicularis* were held at Strasbourg the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2015. I didn't miss any... It took place at the Hotel of the Department (67) in the historical area. We were welcomed by Freddy Zimmerman the president of the Environmental Committee of the Department Council, by André Miquet who is responsible for the Emys Group of the SHF (French Herpetological Society) who developed about the end of the French National Plan on Emys in 2015.

A very pertinent communication was made on the management of natural areas another when studying the influx of immigrants (Jean-Yves Georges in Hérault) or genetics (Sébastien Ficheux in Camargue) or behaviours (Jean-Yves Georges in Alsace). And also all the actions of our Alsatian friends to restore a natural protected area the site of the Woerr. This site will receive *Emys orbicularis* from farming : detection by environmental DNA in Burgundy (Rémi Wattier), the food resources like the biomasse (Corinne Grac), the zebra mussels, but also the discussion on the monitorings of introduction or reintroduction (Jean-Yves Georges) and the works on the site (Sébastien Kern).

The breeding questions were tackled at the end of this first day at the Zoodyssée (Pierre-Jean Albaret), at the zoo of Mulhouse (Benoit Quintard) and finally we had a documentary Web (Christophe Coïc) on the Regional Action Plan in Aquitaine, the pedagogical resources for the Brouage marsh by Cyril or pedagogical posters from our Corsica friends (look at the photos).

Excellent sauerkraut in a specialized restaurant for dinner at night and reunion with our Swiss friends and Verena Lacoste. The round tables and the synthesis were held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February. In the afternoon, we visit the Woerr site at the North East of Alsace, along the Rhine, This site is shared with Germany because we knew at the beginning of this project that the European pond turtle has no borders.

Small transition to tackle the 5<sup>th</sup> Emys Symposium at Kiten in Bulgaria by the Black Sea the 19<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> and 21 of August 2015.

<http://www.faanacarpatica.sk/emys-orbicularis-symposium/transit.html>.

So ten years of silence for these Symposium which worked regularly before : 1996, Dresden (Germany), 1999, Le Blanc (France), 2002, Kosice (Slovakia), 2005, Valentia (Spain). Nothing is easy in the organization of these meetings and we have to congratulate those who embarked on this adventure and support them. It's all the more because we are going to find again our friends of Eastern Europe, their activities, their works, which we know nothing since Valencia.

Nothing is easy also for the French people who plan to go there. Our traditional holidays in August in family, all reservations book in advance a long time before because it is expensive in the summer period, don't help. So there is a necessity to claim as for the "Technical Days" a reduced cost for the registration, the accommodation, the catering. The flying ticket from Paris is already 425 Euros... So I took the decision to go to Kiten and to give you back an account of this event as usual. I will not stay there I will get a lot of Minorca before. I will present my poster on this island updated. I do hope that the French delegation only two persons at this time will increase. Enjoy reading !

Alain Veysset, editor



Photos sélectionnées des 4ème JT



Fredy Zimmerman



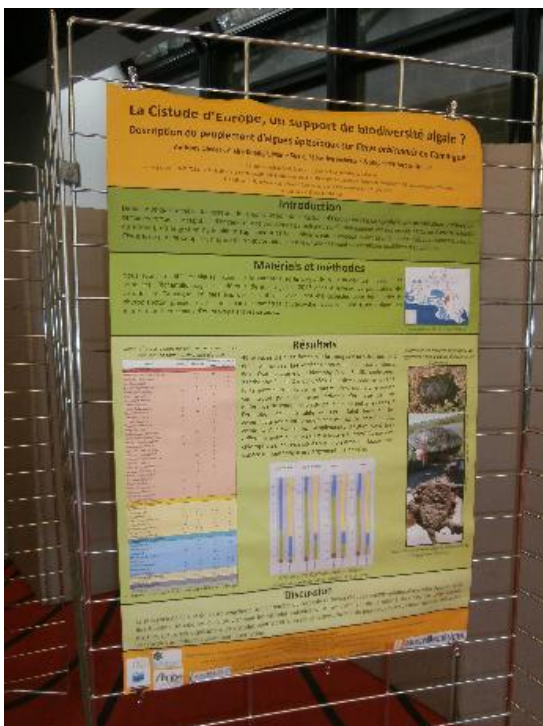
La salle avec les écrans et une cinquantaine de participants...  
Conference room with screens and around 50 participants...



Café-couloir : Christophe, toujours très discret,  
Stéphane Gagno de la SOPTOM,  
André Miquet au fond.



Malette pédagogique corse avec  
de très belles figurines tortues



Poster d'Anthony Olivier



Choucroute festive avec les amis corses !



Photos (suite)

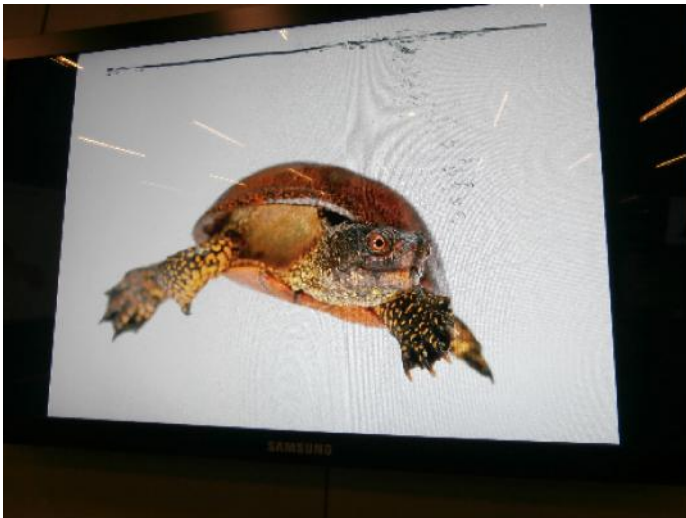


Photo-logo omniprésent.



Ou encore, faire la tête !



Présentation du site de la Woerr, par un froid continental !



Partout des étangs !



Panneau franco-allemand



Bassins d'adaptation avant relâcher





Etang déjà végétalisé



Groupe un peu plus réduit qu'au début...

Et pourquoi ne pas introduire aussi quelques sites d'ensoleillement mobiles pour le bonheur des cistudes ?  
Une blague d'herpétologiste breton, un 1<sup>er</sup> Avril, proposait d'introduire l'alligator dans nos étangs comme prédateur naturel du ragondin, avec des braseros sur les rives pour qu'ils se réchauffent l'hiver !  
Les braseros pour la Woerr seraient bon pour tout le monde !



Turtle Cavalry  
« Onward alligator, speed ! »  
« I'm a crocodile ! »  
« Silence, water horse ! »

## Compétition entre *Emys marmorata* et *Trachemys scripta elegans*

turtle | Photo: [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Flickr/Creative Commons License](#)

The western pond turtle, California's only native freshwater turtle, has been on the decline for decades, and biologists have been scrambling to find ways of making life better for the species. A recent study fills in a scientific blank about the fetching reptile.

Known to many biologists as *Emys marmorata* (though there are plenty of conflicting names out there as scientists wrestle with turtle taxonomy), the western pond turtle's decline is likely due in large part to conversion of the state's freshwater ponds to residential and agricultural use, as well as water pollution in what ponds we've left. But the threat that's gotten the most attention lately is competition from introduced freshwater turtles species, especially including the red-eared slider.

Red-eared sliders, native to the southeastern regions of the United States, have aggressively outcompeted western pond turtles since they were first introduced to the state. The newcomers have displaced western pond turtles from many of the best remaining bodies of suitable fresh water throughout the state. But a [new study](#) suggests that one concern of wildlife biologists about the red-eareds' effect on western pond turtles may not be as big a problem as feared: it looks like western pond turtles aren't catching illnesses from their exotic relatives.



L'*Emys* (ou *Actinemys*) *marmorata* de Californie est, d'après certains chercheurs, à l'origine d'*Emys orbicularis*, au Quaternaire, lors d'une des glaciations, l'Alaska et la Sibérie se retrouvant reliés par "l'Isthme de Béring", elles auraient migré vers l'Asie (Mer d'Aral, Iran) puis l'Europe. Je l'avais déjà constaté lors de mon séjour en Californie, en 1995, la *Trachemys scripta elegans* est bien présente dans le milieu naturel. Elle est une menace pour la *Marmorata*, comme en Europe pour la Cistude, plus sur le terrain de la compétition biologique: sites d'ensoleillement, destruction des juvéniles et des ressources alimentaires que sanitaire, même si ce problème est très sérieux pour *Emys orbicularis* (voir abstract de César Ayres).





Elseya albagula ou tortue serpentine à gorge blanche (wikipédia)

La tortue serpentine à gorge blanche est menacée du fait de son mode de respiration très particulier. Le manque d'oxygénation de l'eau, du fait de barrages, la force à remonter à la surface, et à s'exposer ainsi aux prédateurs.

La tortue serpentine à gorge blanche, qui vit en Australie, est en grand danger, selon la communauté scientifique et le gouvernement australien.

En plus d'être la plus grande tortue d'eaux vives vivant en Australie, l'*Elseya Albagula* a une particularité anatomique qui la rend unique en son genre: elle respire par son cloaque. «*Cette tortue respire par son anus! C'est juste fantastique!*» s'exclame dans The Independant, Jason Schaffer qui les étudie depuis 8 ans au sein de l'université James Cook.

Le spécimen qui peut atteindre l'âge canonique de 100 ans respire donc d'une manière fort peu commune. Cette tortue filtre l'oxygène présent dans l'eau par «*l'arrière*» explique le scientifique. Une technique qui lui permet de rester en sécurité au fond de l'eau à l'abri de certains prédateurs.

Alors comment une tortue aussi bien adaptée à son milieu peut-elle être si proche de l'extinction ? En grande partie à cause de barrages installés sur les rivières qui constituent son milieu naturel. En retenant l'eau, ces constructions humaines ralentissent le débit. Le courant devient plus calme, ce qui empêche la bonne oxygénation de l'eau. Les tortues sont donc obligées de remonter vers la surface pour trouver l'oxygène nécessaire. Elles se retrouvent donc exposées aux prédateurs et limitées dans leurs déplacements pour trouver un partenaire sexuel.

De plus leurs œufs incubent pendant 7 mois ce qui est extrêmement long, et conduit à un taux de mortalité proche de 100 pour cent avant même qu'ils n'éclosent. Une plus grande exposition aux prédateurs, moins de fécondation et presque aucune naissance, l'espèce qui atteint sa maturité sexuelle à 20 ans connaît un véritable papy-boom. «*Si nous ne faisons rien, en un clin d'œil il n'y aura plus aucune tortue serpentine à gorge blanche*» conclut Jason Schaffer.



## Rare baby tortoises (Radiated tortoises) held at French airport

December 30, 2014, SkyNews.Com.Au

French customs officials say they have found 170 critically endangered baby tortoises wrapped in sticky tape and hidden in the secret compartment of a crate transiting Paris' main Charles de Gaulle airport.

The species - known as 'radiated tortoises' - are found only in Madagascar and prized by collectors for the unique pattern on their shell case. Customs officials said the tortoises were destined for Laos.

Fifteen of the baby reptiles have died since their discovery in the crate carrying sea cucumbers on December 14 due to the 'particularly unsuitable conditions of transport,' customs officials said.

The survivors have been taken to Tortoise Village in France's southeastern Var region. "We put them in a warm place and cleaned them with disinfectant," said the centre's director Bernard Devaux.

'They didn't have enough water but they should be rehydrated slowly to avoid a new shock.' He described the baby tortoises as 'magnificent but very fragile, each one has a different shell pattern'.

Weighing only 20g and measuring up to four centimetres the tortoises are too small to face a second international flight and will likely spend a few years in France before being returned to Madagascar. The tortoises can live up to 100 years.

'They are considered the most beautiful tortoises on the planet. You see them sold for \$US10,000 (\$A10,820) in New York or Tokyo,' said Devaux. 'They represent too much money. They are beautiful so they are hunted. Maybe it would be better if they were ugly.'

The tortoises are listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.



Bernard Devaux in November 2012 with a *Testudo ibera* in Turkey, photo : Franck Bonin

## Parasite Spillover from Alien Turtles (*Trachemys scripta*) to European Pond Turtles.

Dear All,

FYI, we've just published our work about the parasite spillover from alien turtles (*Trachemys scripta*) to European pond turtles.

<http://www.int-res.com/abstracts/dao/v113/n1/p75-80/>

This is not just an exchange of parasites between both species, blood fluke infestation caused mortality of around 30% of the population, and there's no treatment.

Here we have the evidence that there's no need of thousands of alien turtles to have a deep impact on native ones. Just a couple of infected turtles can decimate a small population of pond turtles.

So, check your populations for any mortality event. And keep in mind that blood flukes can be carried by *Trachemys*, but also by *Pseudemys*, *Chrysemys*, *Chelydra* and more..

Time for changes in the EU legislation ?

Cesar

### First reported outbreak of severe spirorchidiasis in *Emys orbicularis*, probably resulting from a parasite spillover event

Raúl Iglesias<sup>1,\*</sup>, José M. García-Estévez<sup>1</sup>, César Ayres<sup>2</sup>, Antonio Acuña<sup>3</sup>, Adolfo Cordero-Rivera<sup>4</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** The importance of disease-mediated invasions and the role of parasite spillover as a substantial threat to the conservation of global biodiversity are now well known. Although competition between invasive sliders *Trachemys scripta elegans* and indigenous European turtles has been extensively studied, the impact of this invasive species on diseases affecting native populations is poorly known. During winter 2012-2013 an unusual event was detected in a population of *Emys orbicularis* (Linnaeus, 1758) inhabiting a pond system in Galicia (NW Spain). Most turtles were lethargic and some had lost mobility of limbs and tail. Necropsies were performed on 11 turtles that were found dead or dying at this site. Blood flukes belonging to the species *Spirorchis elegans* were found inhabiting the vascular system of 3 turtles, while numerous fluke eggs were trapped in the vascular system, brain, lung, heart, liver, kidney, spleen, and/or gastrointestinal tissues of all necropsied animals. Characteristic lesions included miliary egg granulomas, which were mostly found on serosal surfaces, particularly of the small intestine, as well as endocarditis, arteritis, and thrombosis. The most probable cause of death in the 3 turtle specimens which were also examined histologically was a necrotic enteritis with secondary bacterial infection associated with a massive egg embolism. The North American origin of *S. elegans*, the absence of prior recorded epizootics in the outbreak area, and the habitual presence of its type host, the highly invasive red-eared slider, in this area suggest a new case of parasite spillover resulting in a severe emerging disease.

**KEY WORDS:** *Emys orbicularis* · Blood flukes · *Spirorchis* · Spirorchidiasis · Mortality · Parasite spillover · *Trachemys scripta*



# Juvenile invasive red-eared slider turtles negatively impact the growth of native turtles : Implications for global freshwater turtle populations

## [Biological Conservation](#)

Volume 186, June 2015, Pages 115–121

- [Steven H. Pearson<sup>a,c,1</sup>](#),
- [Harold W. Avery<sup>b,d,1</sup>](#),
- [James R. Spotila<sup>a,2</sup>](#)

### Highlights

We detail mesocosm experiments that reveal competitive advantages of *Trachemys scripta*.

Introduced *T. scripta* populations may negatively impact native turtles.

Ecological consequences of invasive species may be delayed through slow acting mechanisms.

### Abstract

Invasive species are a significant cause of biodiversity declines on a global scale with novel species interactions often causing ecological damage through predation or competition. Red-eared slider turtles (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) have been introduced to wetlands throughout the world and have negatively impacted native species, particularly other species of turtles. In our controlled feeding experiments in mesocosms juvenile red-eared slider turtles negatively impacted the growth of juvenile red-bellied turtles (*Pseudemys rubriventris*), an IUCN near threatened species and a Pennsylvania threatened species, through exploitative competition for limited food. In mixed species experimental treatments, in which food resources were abundant, juvenile red-bellied turtles grew significantly faster and ate more food than juvenile red-eared slider turtles. In mixed species experimental treatments, in which food resources were limited, red-eared slider turtles ingested more food, gained mass faster, and maintained body condition while red-bellied turtles lost body condition. There were significant differences in growth rates seen between resource availability regimes. In treatments in which resources were abundant there were no significant differences between turtles housed in mixed species or single species groups. In limited resource treatments red-bellied turtle body condition was significantly different between single and mixed species groups while there were significant differences in mass and body condition for red-eared slider turtles. Our results suggest that one mechanism by which red-eared slider turtles detrimentally impact ecologically similar species is through competition for limited food resources. We hypothesize that growth of red-eared slider turtle populations will lead to population declines of native turtle species throughout their introduced ranges because they use limited food resources more efficiently for their growth and development than native species.

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**Allen Salzberg**

Hier, à 01:19 ·

1) Juvenile invasive red-eared slider turtles negatively impact the growth of native turtles: Implications for global freshwater turtle populations

Biological Conservation

Volume 186, June 2015, Pages 115–121

Steven H. Pearson, c, , ,

Harold W. Avery, b, d, 1, , , ,



Of the nearly 330 species of turtles, none is more beautiful than the spotted turtle - itinerant visitor to vernal pools, flooded meadows, swamps, and clear, slow-moving streams. But most likely you've never seen one because Vermont has three separate populations. They're as dark as obsidian with bright yellow spots on the black upper shell, neck, and head, in distinct patterns used by biologists to identify individual turtles.

For five days this spring, Hanover High School environmental science teacher Jeannie Kornfeld and I escorted twelve students into the wilds of southeastern Georgia. We were part of the school's innovative March Intensive and guests of Chris Jenkins, C.E.O. of the Orianne Society, a nonprofit devoted to the conservation of imperiled reptiles and amphibians. The society manages more than 48,000 acres of pine flatwoods and runs critical projects throughout the Southeast and elsewhere, including spotted turtle demography in a longleaf pine forest.

Females spotted turtles may live up to 110 - but like their human counterparts, males fade away sooner; few would live long enough to draw turtle social security - if such a thing existed.

Spotted turtles are gregarious, wandering overland up to a mile each year to exploit temporary feeding bonanzas, to breed, to snooze away the summer heat under a blanket of leaves, and to return en masse to hibernate in flooded swamps in a speckled pile.

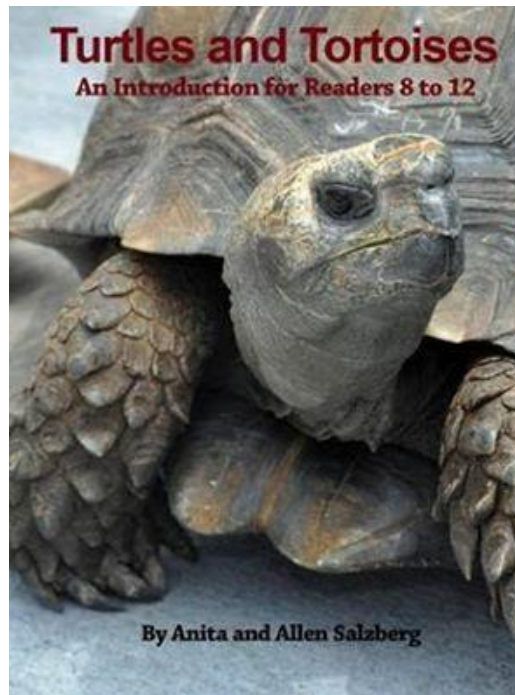
In the suburban garage of Orianne biologist Dirk Stevenson, the students weighed, measured, and sexed five spotted turtles, noted cracks, chips, scratches, or predatory tooth marks in their shells, and then under Dirk's supervision filed indelible notches in the margin along both sides of the upper shell, assigning a unique number to each turtle, which enables biologists to compile growth and movement data whenever a marked turtle is recaptured.

Spotted turtles range on the coastal plain from southern Maine to northern Florida and on the Great Lakes Plain to northeastern Illinois. Like their name, they have a rather spotty distribution, particularly in Vermont, where one colony is found in the southeast, another in the southwest, and the third in the west central part of the state. Steve Parren, who monitors all three, believes beaver once maintained an interconnected matrix of wetlands in the Northeast, which allowed turtles to colonize the Champlain and Connecticut valleys.

Besides the disappearance of wetlands, spotted turtles face another threat. I recently found one for sale online for five hundred dollars plus - which is why I'm not willing to say exactly where they live.

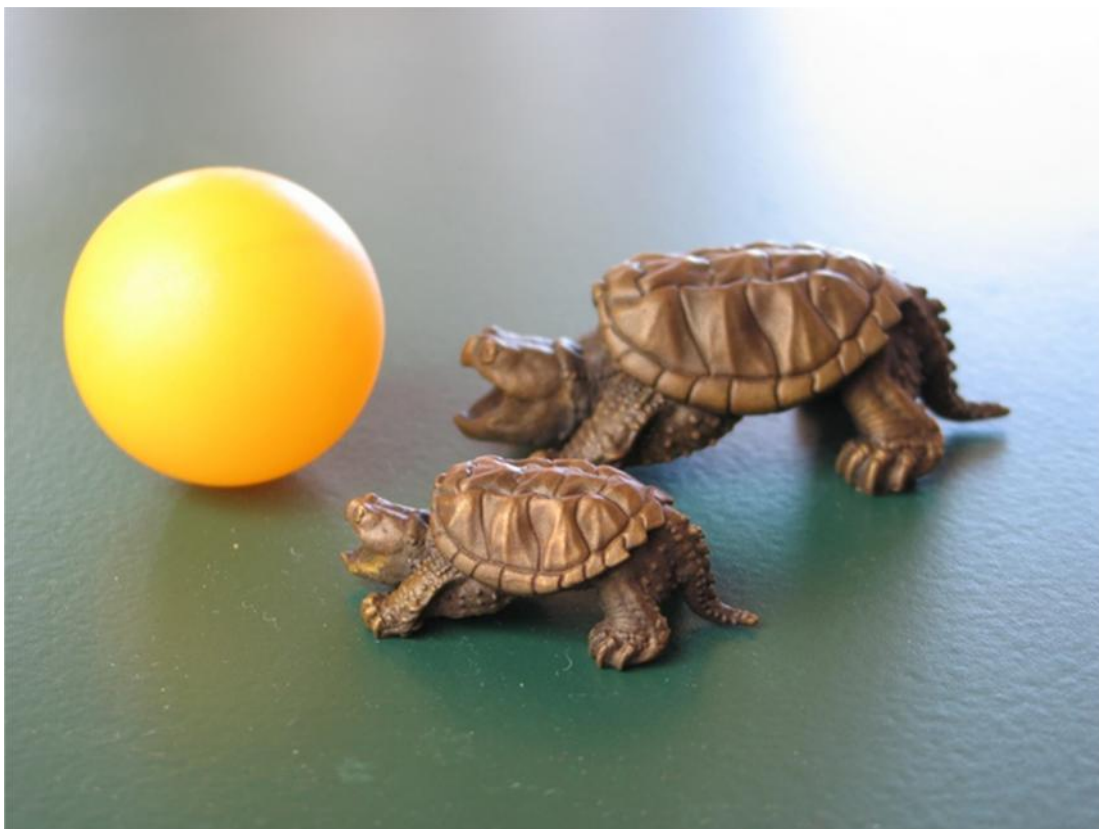


New publication and turtle objects from our american friends .



Allen Salzberg [TheTurtleArmy](#)

**JUST PUBLISHED!**  
Hot off the “presses”: the updated  
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children’s book, **Turtles!**  
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This turtle photobomber is the best thing you'll see all day

All the turtle photobombers are not harmless !



**CHECK THIS OUT:** Two guy haul in a huge snapping turtle from Lake Eufaula.

Dave Harrell of Edmond and Audey Clark of Norman caught this creature and took some photos. Now the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife is wanting to talk to them to find out more info. They want to see more photos to identify the exact type of snapping turtle it is.

<http://www.news9.com/story/25504670/facebook-photo-of-huge-lake-eufaula-snapping-turtle-goes-viral>





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**Galapagos Island Hosts First Baby Tortoises In A Century**



Photo : James Gibbs. This baby tortoise may be shy, but its future—and that of its subspecies—looks promising.

For the first time in more than a century, giant tortoises have bred successfully on the Galapagos island of Pinzón. The announcement raises hope for preserving some of the diversity that inspired Darwin's theory of evolution. March 10, 2015 | by Stephen Luntz



## EMYS CONSERVATION – EDITORIAL POLICY

### Emys Conservation Editorial Policy :

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## **More than 2300 turtles seized at Jakarta international airport**



File photo of Pig-nosed Turtles confiscated in an earlier seizure © Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden  
**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 22nd January 2015**