

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

BICKHAM, JOHN W. 1980. *Chrysemys decorata*.*Chrysemys decorata* (Barbour and Carr)
Hispaniolan elegant slider

Pseudemys decorata Barbour and Carr, 1940:409. Type-locality, "Fond Parisien, [Dépt. de l'Ouest,] Haiti." Holotype, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University 36862, adult male, collected by M. Audain on the A. V. Armour Expedition in 1933 (Barbour and Loveridge, 1946) (not seen by author).

Pseudemys terrapen decorata: Mertens and Wermuth, 1955:366. *C[hrysemys]*. (*T[rachemys]*.) *decorata*: McDowell, 1964: 274. First use of combination.

- CONTENT. *Chrysemys decorata* is a monotypic species.

- DEFINITION. Adults are 120–300 mm in carapace length with females averaging larger than males (Incháustegui, 1972–1973, 1976). The carapace is smooth, weakly keeled, and elongate with the posterior marginals slightly serrate. The carapace is light grayish brown to chestnut with dusky ocelli usually present on the marginals and pleurals. The plastron is unhinged and light yellow with a variable number of round, usually concentric, figures. Two or more concentric figures are nearly always present on the bridge. The skin is grayish brown with conspicuous black bordered yellow stripes on the limbs, tail and neck. The stripes on top of the head are not conspicuous. The dorsum of the tail is yellow owing to the merger of the lateral stripes dorsally. The supratemporal stripe is yellowish green in life. Melanism of old males is slight or nonexistent in this species (Barbour and Carr, 1940). The snout is conical in adults, in males it is long and tapers up from a point between the eyes. The jaws are not serrate, and the median ridge of the alveolar surface is weakly developed. Males possess elongate claws on the front feet, and the male tail is longer and broader at the base than that of females.

- DESCRIPTIONS. General descriptions are given by Barbour and Carr (1940), Cochran (1941) and Incháustegui (1972–1973, 1976). Adults, hatchlings, hybrids, and atypical specimens are described in Incháustegui (1972–1973, 1976). Choanal structure is described by Parsons (1960).

- ILLUSTRATIONS. Barbour and Carr (1940) show drawings in color of the ventral view of an adult male, dorsal and ventral views of a juvenile, and lateral view of the head of an adult male; Cochran (1941) shows dorsal, ventral and side views of a shell.

Williams (1956) has a black and white photograph of a ventral view; Incháustegui (1972–1973, 1976) provide photographs of dorsal and ventral views of a hatchling, a male, a female, and a *C. decorata* × *C. decussata vicina* hybrid. Incháustegui (1972–1973, 1976) also have series of photographs showing variations of plastral patterns and nesting and hatching sequences.

- DISTRIBUTION. *Chrysemys decorata* is known only from the lakes (Etang Saumâtre, Lago Enriquillo, Laguna del Rincón, Trou Caiman) in the Cul de Sac-Valle de Neiba plain in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic on the island of Hispaniola. It has been incorrectly reported from Ile à Vache (Cochran, 1941), and there is a doubtful record from Jérémie (U.S. Nat. Mus. 51994, skull only).

- FOSSIL RECORD. None.

- PERTINENT LITERATURE. The only accounts of the general biology of this species are those of Incháustegui (1972–1973, 1976) who discussed morphology, distribution, behavior, ecology, hybrids, and maintenance in captivity. Cytogenetics has been studied by Bickham and Baker (1976a, b). This species was included in Parsons' (1960) study of choanal structure. Taxonomy was discussed by McDowell (1964) and Williams (1956).

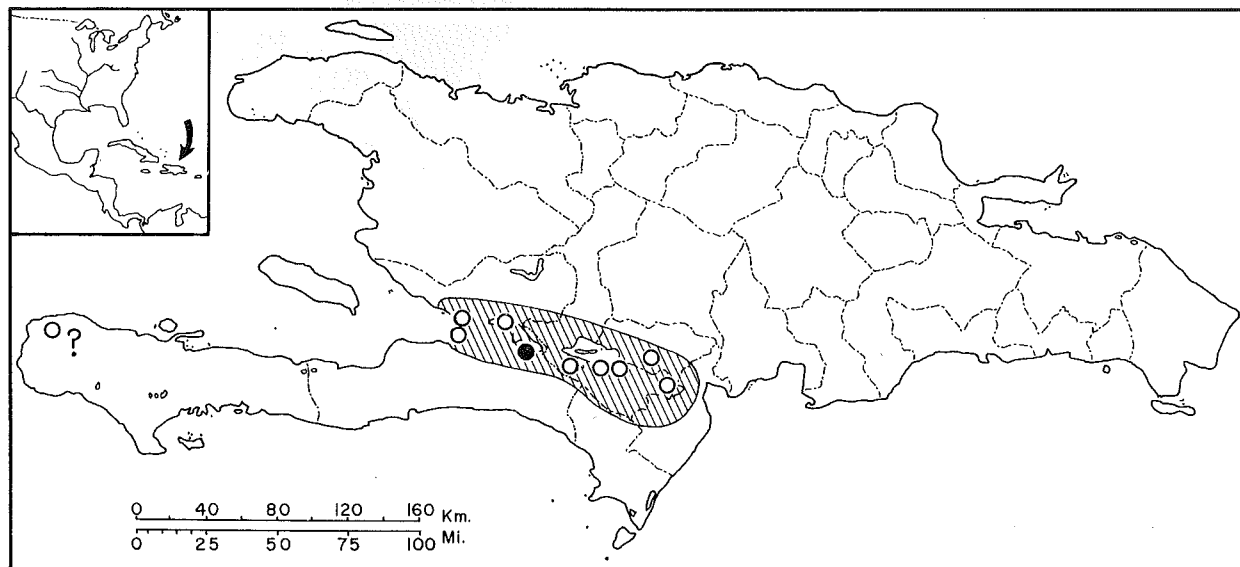
- ETYMOLOGY. The name *decorata* is derived from the Latin *decoratus* implying adorned, elegant, or beautiful, and probably refers to the attractive plastral pattern.

COMMENT

I follow McDowell (1964) as to the generic affinities of this species. On the basis of his osteological analysis, he considered all *Chrysemys* and *Pseudemys* to be congeneric. Mertens and Wermuth (1955) considered all populations of West Indian *Chrysemys* (= *Pseudemys*) to belong to *Chrysemys* (= *Pseudemys*) *terrapen*. I concur with the opinion of Williams (1956) in considering *C. decorata* specifically distinct from all other West Indian populations of *Chrysemys*.

The peculiar distribution of *C. decorata* suggests this species may be important in understanding the zoogeography of Hispaniola. The species is restricted to a narrow strip of lowland which is dotted by saline lakes. In the past this region was inundated by the sea and divided Hispaniola into two islands. Hispaniola is the only island in the Greater Antilles that possesses more than a single species of *Chrysemys*. The historical reasons behind this unique situation and the distributional and systematic relationships of Hispaniolan *Chrysemys* represent fruitful areas of study.

The vernacular name Hispaniolan elegant slider is proposed and derives from the distribution and the specific epithet *decorata*.



MAP. Solid circle marks type-locality, open circles indicate other records, question mark identifies a doubtful record.

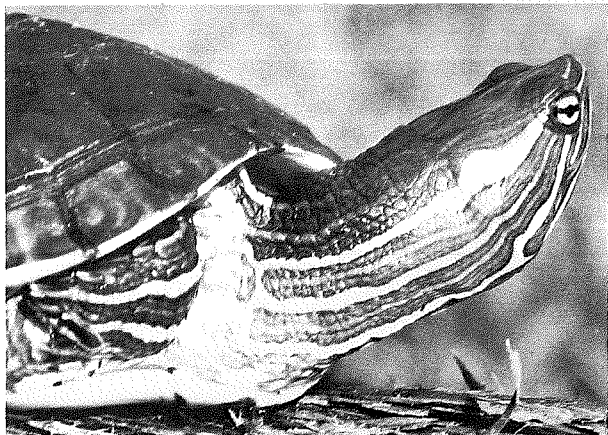


FIGURE. Side view of head of female *C. decorata*, carapace length 40 mm. The supratemporal stripe is yellowish green in this species.

LITERATURE CITED

- Barbour, Thomas, and Archie F. Carr. 1940. Antillean terrapins. *Mem. Mus. Comp. Zool.* 54(5):381-415.
- , and Arthur Loveridge. 1946. First supplement to typical reptiles and amphibians. *Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.* 96(2):59-214.
- Bickham, John W., and Robert J. Baker. 1976a. Chromosome homology and evolution of emydid turtles. *Chromosoma* 54:201-219.
- , and —. 1976b. Karyotypes of some neotropical turtles. *Copeia* 1976(4):703-708.
- Cochran, Doris M. 1941. The herpetology of Hispaniola. U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull. (177):vii + 398.
- Incháustegui Miranda, Sixto Joaquin. 1972-1973. Las Tortugas Dominicanas de agua dulce *Chrysemys decussata vicina* y *Chrysemys decorata* (Testudinata, Emydidae). Thesis, Univ. Autonoma Santo Domingo, Republica Dominicana. 80 p.
- 1976. Las tortugas Dominicanas de agua dulce *Chrysemys decussata vicina* y *Chrysemys decorata* (Testudinata, Emydidae). *Anuario Acad. Cien. Republica Dominicana* (not seen by author).
- McDowell, Samuel B. 1964. Partition of the genus *Clemmys* and related problems in the taxonomy of the aquatic Testudinidae. *Proc. Zool. Soc. London* 143(2):239-279.
- Mertens, Robert, and Heinz Wermuth. 1955. Die rentzen Schildkröten, Krokodile und Brückeneschen. *Zool. Jahrb. Syst. Abt.* 83(5):323-440.
- Parsons, Thomas S. 1960. The structure of the choanae of the Emydinae (Testudines, Testudinidae). *Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.* 123(4):113-127.
- Williams, Ernest E. 1956. *Pseudemys scripta callirostris* from Venezuela with a general survey of the *scripta* series. *Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.* 115(5):145-160.

JOHN W. BICKHAM, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS 77843.

Primary editor for this account, Carl Ernst.

Published 25 January 1980 and Copyright 1980 by the SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES.