

## Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

IVERSON, JOHN B. 1982. *Terrapene nelsoni*.

*Terrapene nelsoni* Stejneger  
Nelson's box turtle

*Cistudo carolina*: Mocquard, 1899:154 (in part; "Sierra del Nayarit").

*Terrapene nelsoni* Stejneger, 1925:463. Type-locality, "Pedro Pablo, Tepic, Mexico; 2500 feet elevation." Holotype, United States National Museum Natural History 46252, an adult alcoholic male, collected 4 August 1897 by E. W. Nelson and A. E. Goldman (examined by author).

*Terrapene goldmani*: Ditmars, 1934:42, fig. 36 (in part; result of transposition of photographs in Fig. 33 and 36).

*Terrapene mexicana*: Müller, 1936:100 (in part).

*Terrapene klauberi* Bogert 1943:2. Type-locality, "Rancho Guirrocoba, approximately 18 miles southeast Alamos, Sonora, Mexico." Holotype, American Museum Natural History 63751, an adult alcoholic female collected between 15 June and 15 October 1941 by John W. Hilton (examined by author).

*Terrepene nelsoni*: Pawley 1971:40.

*Terapene nelsoni*: Nietzke 1973:371.

*Terapene klauberi*: Nietzke 1973:371.

• CONTENT. Two subspecies are recognized: *Terrapene nelsoni nelsoni* and *T. n. klauberi*.

• DEFINITION. Adults reach at least 151 mm in carapace length (average, 130–135 mm). The relatively narrow carapace is flattened dorsally, and the median keel is weak or absent. The carapace is brown with numerous small yellow dots (see subspecies accounts). The plastron has a well developed hinge separating the pectoral and abdominal scutes. The posterior plastral lobe is not emarginate posteriorly, and is smooth or only shallowly concave in adult males, while flat or convex in adult females. An axillary scute is usually absent, but at the 5th marginal when present. The interhumeral seam averages 16–19% of the anterior plastral lobe length. The interabdominal seam is relatively long, averaging 38–39% of the posterior plastral lobe length. The interfemoral seam averages 16% or more of the posterior plastral lobe length. The plastron is yellowish along the margin and bears variable black or brownish markings medially; the dark area may be streaked or spotted with yellow. The head and forelimbs are brown with small yellowish dots. Four digits are present on the pes, and the medial toe of the male pes is capable of extreme medial rotation. The postorbital bar of the skull is absent, and no process arises from the postorbital bone.

• DESCRIPTIONS. General descriptions of the adult are in Stejneger (1925), Ditmars (1934), Bogert (1943), Bogert and Oliver (1945), Milstead and Tinkle (1967), Milstead (1969), and Smith and Smith (1980). Detailed anatomical descriptions include: skull (McDowell, 1964), cervical vertebrae (Williams, 1950), choanal structure (Parsons, 1960, 1968), cloacal bursae (Smith and James, 1958), and sexual dimorphism (Shaw, 1952).

• ILLUSTRATIONS. A color photograph of an adult appears in Pritchard (1979). Black and white photographs are in Ditmars (1934; holotype, Figs. 31, 32, and 36 [latter mislabeled]), Bogert (1943), Pope (1955), Milstead and Tinkle (1967), Milstead (1969), and Pritchard (1979). Line drawings of adults are in Bogert (1943; head only), Wermuth and Mertens (1961), and Smith and Smith (1980); and of the skull, in Bogert and Oliver (1945).

• DISTRIBUTION. *Terrapene nelsoni* is restricted to the Pacific slopes of western Mexico. *T. n. nelsoni* occurs only in a small area of foothills in northern Nayarit; and *T. n. klauberi* is restricted to the desert and foothill areas in southern Sonora and northern Sinaloa. The range is likely much more extensive than museum records indicate.

• FOSSIL RECORD. None.

• PERTINENT LITERATURE. General accounts of the biology are in Milstead and Tinkle (1967) and Pritchard (1979). Additional important references are: longevity (Bowler, 1977), habitat (Myers, 1945; Hardy and McDiarmid, 1969), zoo holdings (Slavens, 1976), and phylogeny (Milstead and Tinkle, 1967; Milstead, 1969; and Moodie and Van Devender, 1978). This species is one of the most poorly known of North American turtles.

• ETYMOLOGY. The names *nelsoni* and *klauberi* are patronyms, honoring Dr. W. E. Nelson (former chief of the U.S. Biological Survey and one of the collectors of the holotype) and Laurence M. Klauber (recognized American herpetologist who directed the early career of the describer), respectively.

### 1. *Terrapene nelsoni nelsoni* Stejneger

*Cistudo carolina*: Mocquard, 1899:154 (in part).

*Terrapene nelsoni* Stejneger, 1925:463. See species synonymy.

*Terrapene goldmani*: Ditmars, 1934:42, fig. 36 (in part).

*Terrapene mexicana*: Müller, 1936:100 (in part).

*Terrapene nelsoni nelsoni*: Mertens and Wermuth, 1955:369. First use of combination.

*Terrepene nelsoni*: Pawley, 1971:40.

*Terapene nelsoni*: Nietzke, 1973:371.

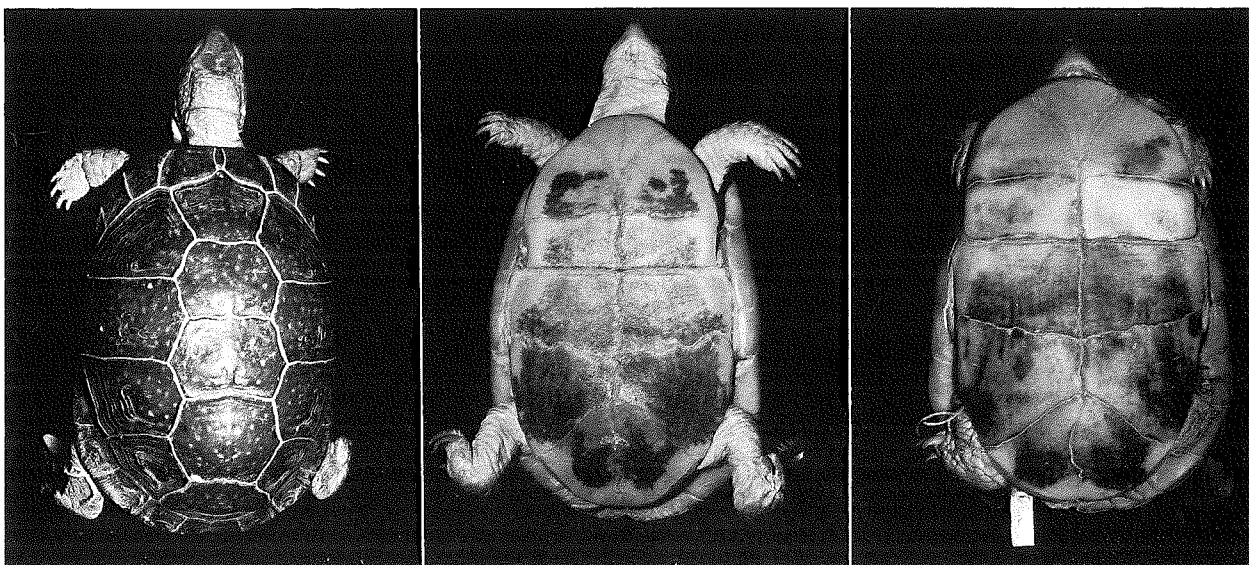
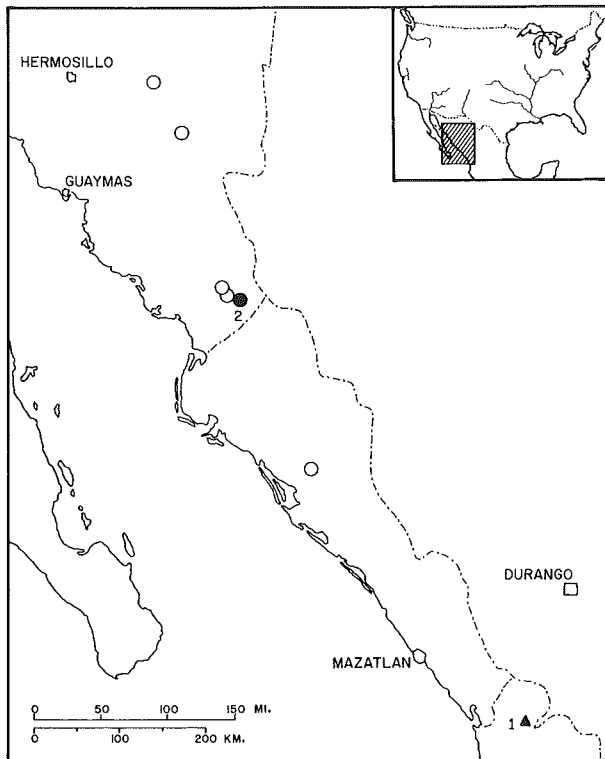


FIGURE. From left to right: holotype of *Terrapene klauberi* (AMNH 63751), dorsal and plastral views, holotype of *Terrapene nelsoni* (USNM 46252), plastral view.



MAP. Triangle (1) marks the type-locality and only known locality of *Terrapene n. nelsoni*. Solid circle (2) indicates the type-locality and open circles other localities for *T. n. klauberi*.

• **DIAGNOSIS.** The interhumeral seam and the interpectoral seam average 16% (range 9–20) and 35% (range 31–40), respectively, of the anterior plastral lobe length. The first vertebral scute has a lower angle of elevation (ca. 30°) than in *T. n. klauberi* and the light dots on the shell are larger and less numerous.

## 2. *Terrapene nelsoni klauberi* Bogert

*Terrapene klauberi* Bogert, 1943:2. See species synonymy.

*Terrapene nelsoni klauberi*: Mertens and Wermuth, 1955:370.

First use of combination.

*Terrapene klauberi*: Nietzke, 1973:371.

• **DIAGNOSIS.** The interhumeral seam and the interpectoral seam average 18% (range, 13–23) and 33% (range, 29–38), respectively, of the anterior plastral lobe length. The first vertebral scute has a higher angle of elevation (ca. 38°) than in *T. n. nelsoni* and the light dots on the shell are smaller and more numerous.

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