

Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science

Volume 18 | Annual Issue

Article 32

1911

Notes on Some Iowa Reptiles

M. P. Somes

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1911 Iowa Academy of Science, Inc.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias>

Recommended Citation

Somes, M. P. (1911) "Notes on Some Iowa Reptiles," *Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science*, 18(1), 149-154.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/pias/vol18/iss1/32>

This Research is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa Academy of Science at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science by an authorized editor of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

NOTES ON SOME IOWA REPTILES.

BY M. P. SOMES.

The reptiles, while scarce in number of individuals and relatively scarce in number of species in the Iowa fauna, still constitute a group of considerable importance from an economic standpoint as well as zoologically. The group is very generally neglected, this possibly in part because of the almost universal prejudice and in part because of the somewhat scattered and technical nature of the literature. But little has appeared concerning the Reptilia of Iowa since the Osborn Catalogue of the Animals of Iowa and since, from a study of the material in the museum of Iowa University and from notes and studies made in the field in many parts of Iowa during the past six years, certain additional species have been noted, it has seemed desirable to present at this time a tentative list of the reptiles to be found in this state. Certain species are marked with a star to indicate that the record is more or less uncertain and information concerning these or any other members of this group will be very gratefully received by the writer.

IOWA REPTILIA.

OPHIDIA—

Colubridae:

- Carphophiops amoenus (Say)
- Storeria occipitomaculatus (Storer)
- * Storeria dekayii (Holbr.)
- Tropidoclonium lineatum (Hallowl.)
- Eutaenia proxima (Say)
- Eutaenia radix (B. & G.)
- Eutaenia saurita (L)
- Eutaenia sirtalis (L)
 - var. dorsalis
 - var. parietalis
- Tropidonotus leberis (L)
- Tropidonotus rigida (Say)
- Tropidonotus grahami (B. & G.)
- Tropidonotus sipedon (L)

Tropidonotus erythrogaster (Shaw)

Tropidonotus fasciatus (L)

***Tropidonotus rhombifer* (Hallowl)

Coluber guttatus (L)

Coluber vulpinus (B. & G.)

Liopeltis vernalis (DeKay)

Zamenis constrictor (L)

var. *flaviventris* (Say)

Pituophis sayi (Schleg.)

Ophibolus gettulus (L)

var. *sayi* (Holbr.)

Ophibolus calligaster (Say)

Ophibolus doliatus (L)

var. *triangulus* (Daud.)

Diadophis punctatus (B. & G.)

Heterodon platyrhinos (Latr.)

Crotalidae:

Agkistrodon contortrix (L)

***Agkistrodon piscivorus* (Lacep.)

Sistrurus catenatus (Raf.)

Crotalus horridus (L)

***Crotalus confluentus* (Say)

LACERTILIA—

Scincidae:

Eumeces fasciatus (L)

Eumeces septentrionalis (Baird)

Anguidae:

Ophiosaurus ventralis (L)

Iguanidae:

Sceloporus undulatus (Daud.)

***Phrynosoma cornutum* (Harl.)

TESTUDINATA—

Trionychidae:

Amyda mutica (Lesueur)

Aspionectes spinifer (Lesueur)

Chelydridae:

Chelydra serpentina (L)

Macrochelys lacertina

Cinosternidae:

***Armochelys odoratus* (Latr.)

***Cinosternum pennsylvanicum* (Bosc.)

Emydidae:

Malacoclemmys geographicus (Lesueur)

Malacoclemmys leiseurii (Gray)

- ***Chrysemys picta* (Hern)
- Chrysemys marginata* (Agassiz)
- Chrysemys belli* (Gray)
- Cistudo ornata* (Agassiz)
- ***Cistudo carolina* (L)

With the hope that it may aid somewhat in the recognition of these interesting animals, the following keys are offered for two of the most readily recognized groups of this order. These keys have been adapted from the works of Cope, Jordan, and others and are simply intended to include the Iowa forms. The characters used in separation of species have been chosen with the aim of making the keys of some use to the student of little technical training rather than the specialist who will have access to monographs covering the details of structures and treating in full of the hemipenial and osteological characters.

THE "GARTER SNAKES" (*EUTAENIA* B. & G.)

The genus *Eutaenia* B. & G. includes a number of rather small and conspicuously banded snakes, which from their type of coloration, are commonly called the "Garter Snakes" or the "Ribbon Snakes." The genus includes our most common snakes and from the fact that the species readily accommodate themselves to widely varying conditions of habitat, some of them are to be found at any locality in the state. The species are all valuable from an economic point of view and since all are harmless they should be protected. One of the most absurd sights I ever witnessed was in the park of a small city, where three men and five small boys succeeded in killing a small "Garter Snake" while several women stood around interestedly admiring the heroes. In using the following key, it should be noted that most of the species have both light and dark forms and frequently intermediate forms appear which makes the coloration a rather varying and uncertain character for recognition of a species.

EUTAENIA B. & G.

Lateral stripe on third and fourth row of scales; scales in 19 rows.

Scales little or not at all spotted.

Tail long (over one-third of total length); slender species.

Chocolate brown with three bright yellow stripes; ventral plates
150 to 160.

SAURITA B. & G.

Tail shorter (from .25 to .3 of total length); relatively stout species.

Blackish, with dorsal stripe brownish yellow and lateral stripes
greenish. V. P. 165-170.

PROXIMA B. & G.

Scales above and below lateral band with quadrate black spots.

Greenish or blackish, with three narrow yellow stripes; six series of black spots; scales very rough, the outer row broad.

RADIX B. & G.

Lateral stripe on second and third row of scales; scales in 19 rows.

Superior labials 8; dorsal band yellow margined with black.

SIRTALIS (L)

var. dorsalis (B. & G.)

Superior labials 7.

Two series of spots between vertebral and lateral bands.

SIRTALIS (L)

Spots large; those of superior row united forming a broad black band.

Stripes dull greenish and space between lateral spots often more or less vivid brick red.

SIRTALIS (L)

var. parietalis (Say).

Spots obscure; space between bands uniform brownish.

Almost uniform brownish; the spots very obscure but the bands more or less distinct

SIRTALIS (L)

var. obscurus (Cope).

TURTLES (TESTUDINATA).

The reptiles of this group form so homogeneous a group as to be readily recognized by all.

Carapace leathery and with flexible margins.

TRIONYCHIDAE.

Carapace firm and ossified.

Toes spreading—not closely bound together.

Tail very long and strong; crested; plastron narrow.

CHELYDRIDAE.

Tail short and not crested; plastron broad.

Lower jaw ending in a long sharp point; plastron with 9 or 11 plates.

CINOSTERNIDAE.

Lower jaw without such pointed tip; plastron with 12 plates.

EMYDIDAE.

TRIONYCHIDAE.

Nostrils rather under the tip of snout; head narrow.

AMYDA Agassiz.

(*Amyda mutica* Lesueur.)

Nostrils terminal; head broad.

ASPIDONECTES, Wagler.

(*Aspidonectes spinifer* Lesueur.)

CHELYDRIDAE.

Under surface of tail with large shields.

CHELYDRA, *Schweig.*

Three moderately high keels on carapace.

(*Chelydra serpentina* L.)

Under surface of tail with scales.

MACROCHELYS.

Three very high keels on the carapace; turtles of large size.

(*Macrochelys lacertina.*)

CINOSTERNIDAE.

Plastron very narrow, not protecting the fleshy parts.

ARMOCHELYS.

Two distinct yellow lateral stripes on head.

(*Armochelys odoratus* Latr.)

Plastron wider, protecting the fleshy parts when lobes are closed.

CINOSTERNUM.

Plastron moderate; head spotted; carapace speckled.

(*Cinosternum pennsylvanicum* Bosc.)

EMYDIDAE.

Plastron without hinge; immovably fixed to carapace.

Alveolar surface of jaws broad; carapace more or less distinctly keeled.

MALACOCLEMYS, (GRAY).

Alveolar surface of jaws narrow; carapace never keeled.

CHRYSEMYS, (GRAY).

Plastron with a transverse hinge; toes scarcely webbed.

CISTUDO.

MALACOCLEMYS (GRAY).

Keel moderately developed; not rising in form of tubercles; a network of fine yellow lines on carapace.

M. geographicus Lesueur

Keel rising in form of tubercles in a high serrate series; no such fine yellow lines on carapace.

M. lesueurii (Gray).

CHRYSEMYS (GRAY).

Carapace perfectly smooth, not keeled; not serrate at hind margin; bright red markings on marginal shields, especially below.

Plastron immaculate, yellow.

C. picta Hern.

Plastron yellow with a long, more or less symmetrical blackish patch at center.

Shields with narrow yellow margins.

C. marginata Agassiz.

Shields traversed by vein-like yellow lines.

C. belli Gray.

CISTUDO.

Carapace not keeled; marked with grouped yellow dashes.

C. ornata Agassiz.

Carapace keeled; black or brown with variously developed spots.

C. carolina L.