

DISTRIBUTION OF  
THE TURTLES OF VIRGINIA (1968)Va. Herpetological Survey  
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In order to get a general view of the distribution of turtles in Virginia a number of collections of preserved specimens had to be checked. The data have been put on a series of maps of the state of Virginia. Other references or texts have been checked and additional information included. It is a beginning -- but by no means complete -- and inaccuracies may have crept into the tabulation.

The accompanying pages will, by the number of question marks and "expected" entries, point up very dramatically just how little data exists. VHS needs the assistance of all interested persons: adults and student collectors. Filling in the gaps can give a "sense of mission" or accomplishment to any field trips by individuals or by groups. Your contributions; collecting notes, or preferably, preserved specimens, will help supply badly needed range data.

If you know of preserved specimens of Virginia turtles in other collections -- private, scientific (college or museum) -- please drop a note to VHS telling where these specimens may be seen. Give any other data on the specimen available -- county, locality, and name and address of collector.

Please check over collections close by for additional specimens from counties which are marked as either "?" or "e" and also "L".

It is the hope of all of us who are putting our efforts behind the Virginia Herpetological Survey to greatly improve the number of individual species and counties covered over the next few years. It can be done by: (a) submitting any collecting notes; (b) preserving a dead specimen; (c) sending collecting data with the specimen to any scientific collection; (d) a carbon copy for forwarding to VHS with an institutional number for reference and confirmation of identification; and (e) making certain that living specimens of value (county record) find their way into these channels as soon as their condition shows a need for this treatment.

("Notes on Preserving Specimens" and developing collections were published in VHS Bulletin No. 48.)

Remember, careful collecting and record keeping, plus proper preserving techniques, will render a considerable service to scientific knowledge of the reptiles of Virginia and adjacent states.

Among the collections searched-- by Mr. William L. Witt, VHS-- were the following: American Museum of Natural History; Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.; Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Boston, Mass.; University of Maryland, College Park, Md.; and U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C.

Officers and Members, VHS

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THE TURTLES OF VIRGINIA

✓ 1. Atlantic Loggerhead	<u>Caretta caretta caretta</u>
✓ 2. Atlantic Green Turtle	<u>Chelonia mydas mydas</u>
✓ 3. Common Snapping Turtle	<u>Chelydra serpentina serpentina</u>
✓ 4. Eastern Painted Turtle	<u>Chrysemys picta picta</u>
✓ 5. Midland Painted Turtle	<u>Chrysemys picta marginata</u>
✓ 6. Spotted Turtle	<u>Clemmys guttata</u>
✓ 7. Wood Turtle	<u>Clemmys insculpta</u>
✓ 8. Bog Turtle	<u>Clemmys muhlenbergi</u>
✓ 9. Eastern Chicken Turtle	<u>Deirochelys reticularia reticularia</u>
10. Atlantic Leatherback	<u>Dermochelys coriacea coriacea</u>
11. Atlantic Hawksbill	<u>Eretmochelys imbricata imbricata</u>
✓ 12. Map Turtle	<u>Malaclemys Graptemys geographica</u>
✓ 13. Ouachita Map Turtle	<u>Malaclemys Graptemys pseudogeographica ouachitensis</u>
✓ 14. Eastern Mud Turtle	<u>Kinosternon subrubrum subrubrum</u>
15. Atlantic Ridley	<u>Lepidochelys olivacea kempfi</u>
✓ 16. Northern Diamond-backed Terrapin	<u>Malaclemmys terrapin terrapin</u>
✓ 17. River Cooter	<u>Chrysemys Pseudemys concinna concinna</u>
✓ 18. Florida Cooter	<u>Chrysemys Pseudemys concinna floridana</u>
✓ 19. Red-bellied Turtle	<u>Chrysemys Pseudemys rubriventris rubriventris</u>
✓ 20. Yellow-bellied Turtle	<u>Chrysemys Pseudemys scripta scripta</u>
✓ 21. Cumberland Turtle	<u>Chrysemys Pseudemys scripta troosti</u>
✓ 22. Stripe-necked Musk Turtle	<u>Sternotherus minor peltifer</u>
✓ 23. Stinkpot	<u>Sternotherus odoratus</u>
✓ 24. Eastern Box Turtle	<u>Terrapene carolina carolina</u>
✓ 25. Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle	<u>Trionyx spinifer spinifer</u>

Over fifty turtles from Virginia counties are preserved in the collection of reptiles and amphibians at the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Early in the process of collecting data on turtles of Virginia, Neil D. Richmond provided VHS with species and county data. This kind of assistance is welcomed by VHS. Keep VHS posted!

In VHS Bulletin No. 29 it was suggested that the Bog Turtle may turn up in intermont valleys of the Blue Ridge in southwestern Va., based on a capture in nearby N.C.

A letter, now five years old, in the VHS files of "personal communications" tells how a VHS member (now in military service) then a student at Duke University, kept watch on a breeding pair of Red-bellied Turtles in Prince George County, Va., near his home. The turtle is recorded for five counties, including Prince George.

Shortly after, a Bog Turtle specimen was taken in Floyd County, Va. This, and a literature record (Dr. E.R. Dunn) for Oakton, Fairfax Co., are the only two records known.

Your comments, additions, corrections, etc. to this tabulation are most welcome.

TURTLES OF VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES  
(Accomack through Cumberland) A-C

	Accomack	Albemarle	Alleghany	Amelia	Amherst	Appomattox	Arlington	Augusta	Bath	Bedford	Bland	Botetourt	Brunswick	Buchanan	Buckingham	Campbell	Caroline	Carroll	Charles City	Charlotte	Chesterfield	Clarke	Craig	Culpeper	Cumberland
1. LOGGERHEAD T.	?																								
2. GREEN TURTLE	?																								
3. COMMON SNAPPING	X	X	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e
4. E. PAINTED T.	X	e	e	e	e	e	e			X			e		X	e	e		e	e	e			e	e
5. X MIDLAND			X					e	e		e	e		e				e					e	e	e
6. SPOTTED TURTLE	X	e	?	e	?	?	e	X	?	?		?	e		e	?	e		e	?	e	e	?	X	e
7. WOOD TURTLE							X	?	?															e	e
8. BOG TURTLE		?	?		?	?		?	?	?	?				?	?		?		?		?	?	?	?
9. E. CHICKEN T.	?																								
10. LEATHERBACK	?																								
11. HAWKSBILL T.	?																								
12. MAP TURTLE											e														
13. OUACHITA MAP T.																									
14. EASTERN MUD T.	X	e	e	e	e	e	X			X		e		X	e	e		e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
15. RIDLEY	?																								
16. N. DIAMONDBACK	e															e			e	e	e	e	e	e	e
17. RIVER COOTER		?	?		?	e						e		e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	?	e	e
18. FLORIDA COOTER																									
19. RED-BELLIED T.	e				e									X	X	e		e	e	e	?				
20. YELLOW-BELL'D																									
21. CUMBERLAND T.																									
22. STRIPE-NECKED											e														
23. STINKPOT	e	X	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
24. E. BOX TURTLE	e	X	X	e	e	e	X	e	e	X	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e
25. E. SPINY SOFT-SHELL											?														

KEY:

- X - county record
- L - literature record
- e - expected (or observed)
- ? - does it occur ?

TURTLES OF VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES  
(Dickenson through King William) D-K

	Dickenson	Dinwiddie	Essex	Fairfax	Fauquier	Floyd	Fluvanna	Franklin	Frederick	Giles	Gloucester	Goochland	Grayson	Greene	Greensville	Halifax	Hanover	Henrico	Henry	Highland	Isle of Wight	James City	King & Queen	King George	King William
1. LOGGERHEAD T.											?														
2. GREEN TURTLE											?														
3. COMMON SNAPPING	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
4. E. PAINTED T.	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	X	e
5. X MIDLAND P.	e				e			e	e				e							e					
6. SPOTTED TURTLE		e	e	X	e	e					e	e		e	e		X				e	X	e	e	e
7. WOOD TURTLE				X	e			X						?						?					
8. BOG TURTLE				L	e	X	e	e	e		?	e	e		?				e	e					
9. E. CHICKEN T.																									
10. LEATHERBACK											?														
11. HAWKSBILL T.											?														
12. MAP TURTLE																									
13. OUACHITA MAP T.																									
14. EASTERN MUD T.		e	e	X	e		e	e			e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e		e	e	e	e	e
15. RIDLEY											X														
16. N. DIAMONDBACK			e								e										e	e	e	e	X
17. RIVER COOTER		e	e	X		e					e	e	?	?	e	e	e	e	e		e	e	e	e	e
18. FLORIDA COOTER											?				?			e			e	e	e	e	e
19. RED-BELLIED T.			?	X	X				?		e				?		e	e			e	e	e	X	e
20. YELLOW-BELL'D																					e				
21. CUMBERLAND T.																									
22. STRIPE-NECKED																									
23. STINKPOT	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
24. E. BOX TURTLE	e	e	e	X	X	e	e	e	X	X	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	X	e	e	X	e	e	e
25. E. SPINY SOFT-SHELL T.																									

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TURTLES OF VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES  
(Lancaster through Pulaski) L-P

	Lancaster	Lee	Loudoun	Louisa	Lunenburg	Madison	Mathews	Mecklenburg	Middlesex	Montgomery	Nansemond	Nelson	New Kent	Norfolk	Northampton	Northumberland	Nottoway	Orange	Page	Patrick	Pittsylvania	Powhatan	Prince Edward	Prince George	Prince William	Pulaski	
1. LOGGERHEAD T.	?						?							?	?	?											
2. GREEN TURTLE	?						?							?	?	?											
3. COMMON SNAPPING	e	X	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	X	X	e	X	e	X	e	e	X	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	
4. E. PAINTED T.	e		e	X	e	X	e	e	e	X	X	e	X	X	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	
5. X MIDLAND P.		e																	e							e	
6. SPOTTED TURTLE	X		e		e	X	e	X	e	X	e	X	X	X	X	e	e	e	e			e	e	e	e	e	
7. WOOD TURTLE			X			?													?								
8. BOG TURTLE			e	?		e				?	e						e	e	e	e	?					e	
9. E. CHICKEN T.																											
10. LEATHERBACK	?						?				?			?	?	?											
11. HAWKSBILL T.	?						?				?			?	?	?											
12. MAP TURTLE		X								X																	
13. OUACHITA MAP T.		e																									
14. EASTERN MUD T.	X		e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	X	X	X	X	e	e	e			X	e	e	e	e	e	
15. RIDLEY	?						?			?				?	?	X											
16. N. DIAMONDBACK	e						e	e	e	e		X	e	e	e	e								e			
17. RIVER COOTER	e			e	?		e	e	e	X		e	X		e	e	e				?	e	e	e	?		
18. FLORIDA COOTER	e						e	e	e	e		e	e	e	e	e								e			
19. RED-BELLIED T.	e		e				e	e	e	e		X	e	e	e	e								e			
20. YELLOW-BELL'D										e				e													
21. CUMBERLAND T.		?																									
22. STRIPE-NECKED		X																									
23. STINKPOT	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	X	e
24. E. BOX TURTLE	X	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	X	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	X	X	X	e
25. E. SPINY SOFT-SHELL T.		X																									

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TURTLES OF VIRGINIA BY COUNTIES  
(Rappahannock through York) R-Z

	Rappahannock	Richmond Co.	Roanoke Co.	Rockbridge	Rockingham	Russell	Scott	Shenandoah	Smyth	Southampton	Spotsylvania	Stafford	Surry	Sussex	Tazewell	Warren	Washington Co.	Westmoreland	Wise	Wythe	York	Newport News - Hampton	Virginia Beach (Prs. Anne)
1. LOGGERHEAD T.																						?	?
2. GREEN TURTLE																						?	?
3. COMMON SNAPPING	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	X	e	e	e	X	e	X	e	e	e	e	e
4. E. PAINTED T.	e	e								e	e	e	e	e				e				e	X
5. X MIDLAND P.			e	e	e	e	e	e	e						e	e	e	e	e	e	e		
6. SPOTTED TURTLE	e	e								e	e	e	e	e			e	e			e	?	X
7. WOOD TURTLE	e			?				e		?	?					e							
8. BOG TURTLE	e		?	?	?			e		?					?	e	?			?			
9. E. CHICKEN T.																							X
10. LEATHERBACK																						e	e
11. HAWKSBILL T.																						?	?
12. MAP TURTLE						?	e	e							?		X		?	?			
13. OUACHITA MAP T.						?	e	e							?		e		?	?			
14. EASTERN MUD T.	e	X								e	e	X	e	e				e			e	X	X
15. RIDLEY																						?	?
16. N. DIAMONDBACKED		e								e			e	e			X			X		e	X
17. RIVER COOTER		e								e	e	e	e	e				e			e	e	X
18. FLORIDA COOTER																						e	X
19. RED-BELLIED T.		e								e	e	e	e	e		?	e			e		e	X
20. YELLOW-BELLIED										?												?	?
21. CUMBERLAND T.						?	e										e		?				
22. STRIPE-NECKED M.						?	e	?							?		e						
23. STINKPOT	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
24. E. BOX TURTLE	X	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	e	e	e	X	e	e	X	e	X
25. E. SPINY SOFT-SHELL TURTLE						e	e	X					e	e	e			e					

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Some Notes on Range of Virginian Turtles:

The Atlantic Ridley has been recorded in Chesapeake Bay on five occasions, according to Jerry D. Hardy (Chesapeake Science). The first is a small female specimen, in the U.S. National Museum collection (USNM 86814) collected by W.K. Hadley, 1932, as caught "near Reedville, Northumberland County, Va. Another specimen was taken in that area in 1956 (USNM 137573) by Captain W.J. Biddlecomb.

William H. Massmann of the Va. Inst. of Marine Sciences recorded a specimen of Ridley from Gloucester Point, Va., caught by fishermen in July 1951. He commented that he had seen several others in the area.

The Wood Turtle may range well into Virginia from the northern tier of counties. Summer campers and hikers should be on the alert for specimens in the woodlands.

The Box Turtle is known from the Shenandoah National Park at 4,000-foot elevations. Does it occur on White Top or Mt. Rogers (elev. of 5,700 feet) Grayson and Smyth Co?

While the E. Painted Turtle and the Midland Painted Turtle are on the state list, the majority of Midland Painted Turtles from this state are intergrades; i.e. C.p. picta X C.p. marginata. Intergradation occurs along the West Virginia border; more typical Midland Painted Turtles may occur in the extreme southwestern counties.

Does the Florida Cooter occur in a natural habitat anyplace except Great Dismal Swamp?

Cumberland Turtle: no Va. record to date. Expected in extreme s.w. in rivers draining into Ohio-Tenn.

The Stripe-necked Musk Turtle is found in the rivers and tributaries of southwestern Virginia which form a part of the Ohio-Tennessee drainage system. It may occur as far east as the western slope of White Top mountain (Washington Co.) VHS records are for Lee County.

The Eastern Mud Turtle, unknown on the western side of the Blue Ridge, has been seen in Magnolia Swamp, Augusta County. (Spotted Turtles have been recorded in same area.) Isolated specimens may be transplants or "releases". A few more recordings may establish a basis for extending the ranges of both species beyond that now accepted.

More county records are needed on the Northern Diamond-backed Terrapin. Chesapeake Bay estuaries or the Eastern Shore counties are a likely area to check for terrapin.

The Ouachita (false) Map Turtle is not known from the state, but the species may turn up in Tennessee River drainage system in the south western Va. counties; see tables.

Yellow-bellied Turtle, another of the pet store regulars, is native to the Great Dismal Swamp. It is also reported in Richmond area. Does it naturally occur -- established and breeding -- north of the James and east of Richmond? Definite (preserved) records are required.

River Cooter -- does it occur in the larger rivers all of the way to the Blue Ridge? Records?

Red-bellied Turtle: How far south along Shenandoah River does it occur? Does it penetrate the Blue Ridge along the James or Roanoke?

OCCURRENCE OF THE LEATHERBACK  
TURTLE ON VIRGINIA'S S.E.COAST

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As I was cruising on the beach on August 20, 1965, about 7 miles S. of Sand Bridge (formerly Princess Anne County), I discovered a dead Atlantic Leatherback sea turtle.

It was 10:00 p.m. and low tide. It's shell measured about 52 inches in length and I estimated it to be 400 to 450 lbs. in weight. It had been dead about two or three days.

I think it had been killed by a ship because it had been decapitated and a section of the carapace was missing. This is not a northern record for Dermochelys, but they are not very common off of Virginia. I talked to Mr. J. R. Martin of Virginia Beach and Norfolk, who has collected reptiles in Virginia most of his life; he had never seen one.

David Jones

UNUSUAL or RARE TURTLES should be saved alive, out of direct sun light and provided with water. A photograph should be made and its identification confirmed. IF THE TURTLE is DEAD, preserve shell or head, whichever is in best state of preservation. If a juvenile--small enough to preserve complete-- use 40 percent formalin. Your local druggist can supply the solution without prescription. Keep out of reach of children; it is a poison. Directions for preserving specimens are contained in:

(VHS BULLETIN No. 48)

Color photography should not be neglected. Preservation of rare specimens in any solution brings about color changes. If this is an important consideration take a color snapshot or color slide, preferably 2" X 2".

VHS COLLECTION DATA SLIPS WILL be carried in each regular issue of VHS Bulletin. USE THEM! VHS does not publish the collection-site details; only the county of capture, and name of collector.

This is part of a statewide effort to expand knowledge of the Va. reptiles and amphibians.

Report unusual or rare turtles or other Virginian reptiles and amphibians to the nearest museum, zoo, university, college, or high school biology instructor. If on Federal or Virginia State property, state park or forest, notify the nearest park or forest ranger and let him make the collection. (There are usually stiff penalties for collecting on reservations.)

Drop a letter with details on the find and disposition of specimen to:

Virginia Herpetological Soc.  
4706 Tallahassee Avenue  
Rockville, Md. 20853

Or, use VHS Roster (VHS-B #46) to locate nearest VHS officer or biology instructor-member.

Among the likely places to take a preserved specimen, are:

Bridgewater College, Dr. Jopson;  
Hampden-Sydney College, Biol. Dep't;  
National Museum, Washington, D.C.  
Univ. of Va., Charlottesville, Va.  
VMI, Dr. Robert Carroll;  
VPI, Dr. Robert D. Ross; and  
William & Mary, Dr. G.R. Brooks.

Your co-operation is welcomed.