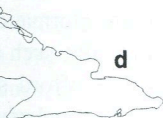


m Southwest Florida,

Date captured	Country
Nov 88	Cuba
Jan 91	Mexico
Mar 96	Cuba
Sept 93	Cuba

Fig. 1 depicts the locations where turtles were captured. Information from Mexico indicated that the coast of Yucatan provides some insight into the foraging habitat for turtles that nest in south-Florida. Tag return data previously, studies utilize satellite telemetry to create the migratory patterns of turtles which nest on the coast. This information highlights the need for international cooperation issues related to sea turtle population, uncertain future. (University of Florida) and John Hernandez, Parks and Recreation. We also used tag data from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Service in Miami and volunteers who monitor nesting beaches in the presence of Peter Eliasz and the Center for Sea Turtle

AAV836 - a  
QQP188 - b  
QQL610 - c  
NNK880 - d



of sea turtles.

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### **TRIONYX MUTICUS** (Smooth Softshell Turtle). **FORAGING.**

At 1000 h on 24 June 1998, I observed through binoculars 10 softshell turtles, *Trionyx muticus* and *T. spiniferus*, in the Canadian River at the NM 419 bridge in San Miguel County, New Mexico, USA. I hand captured two of the *T. muticus*, a male 80 mm plastron length and a juvenile female 88 mm plastron length, in a small (~1 x 3 m), shallow sandbar pool separated from the main stream by ca. 10 m. Also in the pool were one partially eaten fresh carcass of a hatchling cliff swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*), on which the turtles were observed feeding, and two cliff swallow eggshells. Another freshly killed hatchling cliff swallow was on the sand ca. 30 cm from the pool. *Trionyx* tracks led from the pool to and around the partially eaten carcass. Both the hatchlings and eggshells apparently had fallen from the numerous active cliff swallow mud nests attached to the underside of the bridge directly above.

Although *Terrapene carolina* is known to feed on passerine birds killed at TV towers (Alsop and Wallace 1978. J. Tennessee Acad. Sci. 53:134), the identified prey in most reports of turtles eating birds are young waterfowl (Ernst et al. 1994. Turtles of the United States and Canada. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C. 578 pp.). Smith (1956. Handbook of Amphibians and Reptiles of Kansas, Univ. Kansas Mus. Nat. Hist. Misc. Publ. No. 9) stated that the diet of *Trionyx muticus* included "perhaps young birds." However, Webb (1962. Univ. Kansas Publ. Mus. Nat. Hist. 13:429-611) thought Smith's statement erroneous and in fact likely referred to waterfowl eaten by *T. ferox*, as they are known to do (Webb, *op. cit.*). *Trionyx muticus* is known to feed on a large variety of terrestrial and aquatic invertebrate, vertebrate, and plant prey (Webb, *op. cit.*; Plummer and Farrar 1981. J. Herpetol. 15:175-179). For male *T. muticus* in the Kansas River, >65% of the diet consisted of terrestrial invertebrates that had fallen into the water (Plummer and Farrar, *op. cit.*). Feeding on hatchling terrestrial birds appears to be yet another expression of the highly opportunistic feeding behavior of this primarily carnivorous species.

I thank Charles Painter for comments on the manuscript.

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## **CROCODILIA**

**ALLIGATOR MISSISSIPPIENSIS** (American Alligator). **WINTER MORTALITY.** Restoration of the American alligator within its presumed historical range in Arkansas began following its protection in 1972 and extended through the early 1980s (Arkansas Game and Fish Commission [AGFC], unpublished data). Approximately 2800 alligators were released into 42 Arkansas counties, producing an enhanced species range (see Conant and Collins. 1991. Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North

America. Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston Massachusetts. 616 pp.) that far exceeds the currently-depicted distribution in the state (Ross and Ernst 1994. Cat. Am. Rept. 600.1-600.14).

On 17 March 2001, at ca. 1630 h, an adult *mississippiensis* measuring 312 cm in length was found in the riparian zone of Buffalo Slough, a tributary of the Ca. 2.4 km SW of Egypt (T14N, R1E, S14), Craighead County, Arkansas, USA. This location lies at the northwestern extreme of the species' range in the United States (Conant and Collins 1991). The alligator, discovered by two local youths (Joey G. Tim Lamb), was reported to an AGFC wildlife officer (Tim Wilkins) who immediately transported the specimen to the State University within the same county. The specimen had begun necrosis but exhibited no external wounds. The specimen was placed in a freezer at the Department of Biology at the State University of Science at 2030 h. AGFC biologist Sam Barkley (who was involved with the alligator restocking program and who reported the specimen), stated that this alligator was not one of the juvenile specimens released in this part of the state. He stated that the animal died from exposure during a flooding episode subsequent cold snap that occurred in the area one week after the discovery. This alligator represents the largest specimen reported from northeastern Arkansas.

The alligator was deposited into the Arkansas State University Museum of Zoology herpetological collection (ASU-MZ). We thank Sam Barkley for allowing us to salvage the specimen for providing insight into its demise.

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**PALEOSUCHUS TRIGONATUS** (Schneider's Snout-eater). **NESTING.** Natural history and nesting patterns of est-dwelling caimans is remarkably lacking due to the difficulty of finding and studying these animals in their remote habitats. In this contribution we document the characteristics, development, and hatching of a *Paleosuchus trigonatus* nest found in the Tiputini River in the Ecuadorian Amazon Basin.

The nest was discovered serendipitously on 30 September while walking in a sector of *terra firme* forest at least 100 m from the main river and 4.5 m from a shallow stream. The nest was at the base of a tree that had a broken branch producing a gap in the canopy. This resulted in the nest being under ca. 82% canopy coverage in the area that received direct sunlight.

The nest was built with decomposing leaf litter, sticks, and soil. Small roots were found throughout, indicating the nest was not recently constructed. The nest was of typical size with a diameter of 1.40 m, and a height of 39 cm. The chamber was located in the center of the leaf pile and was 22 cm wide, and 31 cm deep at its deepest point. It contained 16 fertile eggs that were on average 68.65 ± 43.61 ± 0.61 cm wide and 73.75 ± 3.11 g in weight.