

FEATURE ARTICLES

COMMON MAP TURTLE REDISCOVERED IN KANSAS

by

David Edds, Warren Voorhees, Judy Schnell, and Lenn
Shipman
Division of Biological Sciences
Emporia State University
Emporia, Kansas 66801

The Common Map Turtle (*Graptemys geographica*), feared to be extirpated from Kansas, has been rediscovered at six sites in Allen, Anderson, Franklin, and Osage Counties. This species was last collected in the state in 1952 by Dr. Robert F. Clarke (Clarke, 1953, KU 187861), at Long Creek, Osage County. However, since that time, it has escaped detection, leading the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KWDP) to classify it (and any other native species not encountered in at least 35 years) as extirpated in Kansas. This summer, the KDWP, through the Kansas Nongame Improvement Fund, and Emporia State University, via its Faculty Research and Creativity Committee, provided funding to investigate the population status of the Common Map Turtle in Kansas, and to document any areas of occurrence, as well as specific types of habitats utilized by this species.

On 24 June 1990, we captured a single *G. geographica* at the historical site of occurrence at Long Creek, near Melvern, Osage County. The specimen was an adult ♀ and has been deposited in the Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas (KU 217149). On 3 July 1990, we captured two large ♀♀ *G. geographica* at Frog Creek, a tributary to Long Creek, in Osage County. One of these (KU Color Slides 8872-8873) measured 226 mm carapace length, a new maximum size record for this species in Kansas (Collins, 1990). On 11 July 1990, we caught a single ♀ *G. geographica* in the South Fork of Pottawatomie Creek, near Garnett, Anderson County, another site of historical occurrence. The species had last been captured at this site in 1931 (KU 15881-2).

A new Kansas county record for this species was collected from the Marmaton River, southeast of Moran, Allen County on 29 July. The lone specimen was a 213 mm ♀. We captured two ♀♀ and one ♂ *G. geographica* in a single net at a second site in Long Creek, Osage County on 1 August. On 9 August, we collected one ♂ *G. geographica* from north of Pomona on Appanoose Creek, Franklin County.

G. geographica is reported to inhabit large, slow-moving or still rivers and lakes, but, in Kansas at least, also inhabits smaller streams. We caught these specimens in 2.5 foot, 1-in. nylon mesh hoop nets baited with canned creamed corn, fresh mussel, and canned smoked clams, respectively. Analysis of a fecal pellet of one of the Frog Creek animals indicated feeding on mulberries and insects. Individuals held in the laboratory for observations have also fed on crayfish.

We have marked and released these *G. geographica* and, as our study continues, we will attempt to recapture individuals in an effort to estimate population densities and learn more about the species' biology, including growth rate and home range. In addition to monitoring populations of *G. geographica* at localities where we encounter the species, we will investigate other historical sites of occurrence in Kansas, as well as explore the eastern portion of the state for additional populations.

LITERATURE CITED

- Clarke, R. F. 1953. Additional turtle records for Kansas. Trans. Kansas Acad. Sci. 56 (4): 438-439.
- Collins, J. T. 1990. Maximum size records for Kansas amphibians and reptiles. Kansas Herpetol. Soc. Newsl. 81: 13-17.

THE TALE (TAIL?) OF THE \$1,375.92 GARTER SNAKE

by
Karen Toepfer
303 West 39th Street
Hays, Kansas 67601

I often wonder how I get myself into these messes. It was September 6, 1990 when yet another one of my "close encounters of the Herp kind" (as my husband calls them) was about to begin.

As chapter advisor for one of the sororities at Fort Hays State University, I had commissioned longtime KHS member and photographer Larry Miller to come to Hays and take a group photo of the girls. Several members also wanted individual pictures taken. It was during one of these individual sessions that this story began. It was about 7:30 pm on that evening of the 6th when Larry and I picked up two girls at the sorority house. We noticed the clouds were beginning to build