

**IX. NOTES ON THE MIGRATION OF MACROCHELYS  
LACERTINA**

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(Abstract)

In this paper, record of the migration of a specimen of *Macrochelys lacertina* (alligator terrapin) is given, covering a period of three years. The specimen under study was captured in September

1915, at Aylesworth Ferry, in the Washita River, between Bryan and Marshall counties, Oklahoma, by N. R. Goggans, and weighed fifty pounds when brought to the biological laboratories of the Southeastern State Teachers' College, of Durant, Oklahoma. Here it was placed in a five-foot galvanized tank in the outdoor laboratory in Wild Acre, along with the other live collections in the vivaria under study. Here it was observed by hundreds of visitors, and for three years was transferred during the inclemency of winter weather to a special tank in the main laboratory, and returned during open season to the campus collections, during which time, habit and feeding studies were carried out by the students.

In the summer of 1918, it was decided to liberate the specimen for migration studies. Mr. Floyd Hagood and the writer affixed a large sheet copper plate to a left hinder marginal plate, and liberated the specimen in Blue River, Armstrong, Oklahoma, beneath the highway bridge leading to Caddo.

The inscription on the plate was as follows:

SOUTHEASTERN STATE NORMAL.  
DURANT, OKLAHOMA. REPORT TO  
DEPT. BIOLOGY. M. M. WICKHAM.  
TAG NO. 10. SEPT. 12, 1915.  
WT. 50 LBS., LENGTH 34 IN.  
DO NOT KILL. MACROCHELYS LACERTINA.

The specimen was liberated in latter July 1918, at the point indicated September 11, 1918, W. B. Speairs, steward of the convict camp, working on the highway between Durant and Caddo, and C. R. Harper, found the large terrapin, bearing tag no. 10, in a mud-hole near the water in-take for the city of Durant, in River Blue, some 300 yards from the point where it was returned to the river in latter July. The specimen was taken to camp by the convicts, cleaned, weighed, and measured. A copy of the inscription was furnished to the writer by W. B. Speairs. There were no appreciable differences this time in weight or measurement. The specimen was replaced where found by the convicts.

In latter July 1921, this specimen was recaptured at Nail's Crossing, River Blue, just west of Kenefic, Bryan county, Oklahoma, and the inscription of the tag recopied and furnished to the writer. The specimen was tied temporarily to a bush on the bank with an improvised tether, while the captors went in search of measuring tape and scales to secure data on the specimen requested by the tag. Upon their return they were disappointed to find that the powerful terrapin had pulled up the shrub and disappeared again into the stream.

Studies of the map of this region show that Nail's Crossing is some 17 or 18 miles up-stream from Armstrong, where it was placed in River Blue, July 1918. During the three years it has been captured twice, and averaged six miles up-stream migration per year. While there has been a general up-stream migration in this period, doubtless there have been a number of advances and lapses in its general route.

The specimen while in captivity bit an oar in two, bit through an inch board, and crushed mussel shells with ease. Before its release it had become so used to visitors that it seemed to enjoy the presence of students in the laboratories where it habitually basked in the winter sunshine on the floors. The specimen was estimated to be about 100 years old.