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TESTUDINES — TURTLES


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APALONE SPINIFERA (Spiny Softshell). USA: GEORGIA: TOWNS CO.: Brastown Creek near city of Young Harris (34.83491°N, 83.85874°W; WGS 84), 4 July 2016. J. Lindley McKay and Phil Marantelli. Verified by Nikole Castleberry, Georgia Museum of Natural History (GMNH 51172; photo voucher). First county record (Jensen et al. 2008. Amphibians and Reptiles of Georgia. University of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia. 575 pp.). Nearest record from Georgia is of subspecies A. s. aspera, ca. 44.6 km airline from Yahoopa Creek, Lumpkin Co. (Brown 2015. Herpetol. Rev. 46:563). In North Carolina the closest vouchered records are of A. s. spinifera from the French Broad river system in western Madison Co., approximately 120 km in a direct line (Palmer and Braswell 1995. Reptiles of North Carolina. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. 412 pp.). Adult female, first observed completely buried in mud except the snout, in clear water approximately 10–15 cm deep. Brastown Creek at this place and time was round 4 m maximal width and 35 cm maximal depth. The turtle was facing the bank and its head was approximately 30 cm from the edge. This individual possessed a single dark submarginal line along rear of carapace, and pale postorbital and postlabial stripes were not connected, characteristics of subspecies A. s. spinifera (Ernst et al. 1994. Turtles of the United States and Canada. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C. 578 pp.), but due to broad phenotypic variation in the species we refrain from assigning subspecies at this time.

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APALONE SPINIFERA (Spiny Softshell), USA: SOUTH DAKOTA: YANKTON Co.: James River public access, US Hwy 81, ca. 2.0 rd km N jct 300th St (43.05711°N, 97.39866°W; WGS 84). 1 October 2014. Drew R. Davis. Verified by Travis J. LaDuc. Biodiversity Collections, University of Texas at Austin (TNIC 100901 [DRD 2072]). The skeleton of an adult female was found along the river shoreline near a public access point. New county record filling a gap in the known distribution of this species in southeastern South Dakota, where it has been documented from adjacent Clay County, South Dakota (Ballinger et al. 2000. Trans. Nebraska Acad. Sci. 26:29–46) and Cedar County, Nebraska (Ballinger et al. 2010. Amphibians and Reptiles of Nebraska. Rusty Lizard Press, Oro Valley, Arizona. 400 pp.; Fogell 2010. A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Nebraska. University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska. 158 pp.). Apalone spinifera is predicted to occur throughout the Missouri River and several of its larger tributaries, but there are no collected specimens from Yankton County (Bandas and Higgins 2004. A Field Guide to South Dakota Turtles. SDCES EC 919. South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota. 36 pp.; Kiesow 2006. Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of South Dakota. South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Pierre, South Dakota. 178 pp.). The closest known specimen to this individual is from ca. 51.3 km to the southeast from near Vermillion, Clay County, South Dakota (University of Nebraska State Museum [UNSM] 18314). This specimen was collected under a South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Scientific Collecting Permit (#2014_82).

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The Lauderdale County record is a new county record and the Smith County record is the first vouchered record for the county (Selman and Qualls 2009. Herpetol. Conserv. Biol. 4:171–184; Lindeman 2013. The Map Turtle and Sawback Atlas: Ecology, Evolution, Distribution, and Conservation. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma. 460 pp.). The Lauderdale County record is also the first record of the species in Okatibbee Creek, the eastern tributary that forms the Chickasawhay River; it extends the range of the species 19.4 river km NW above the previous most upstream record in the Chickasawhay River in Clarke County (an unvouchered sight record) and 24.7 river km upstream of the previous most upstream vouchered specimen in the Chickasawhay River in Clarke County (Selman and Qualls 2009, op. cit.). The Smith County record confirms a sighting of the species reported from 20.4 river km downstream of the site vouchered herein.

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SMITH Co.: Leaf River, Hwy 18 crossing W of Sylvarena (32.01269°N, 89.43265°W; WGS 84). 21 June 2016. Peter V. Lindeman. Verified by W. Selman. UF 179395 (photo voucher). Leaf River, Co Rd 80 crossing N of Taylorsville (31.92032°N,