

down. I walked down there with my coffee (it was just this past spring a year ago), and I heard this "shhheew." I thought what in the world is that? You could not tell where it was coming from, because it is really hard to determine where a sound like that is coming from. I kept looking. I had heard it a couple of times. Now, it turned out to be a turtle laying eggs.

P: Each time she blew?

W: Each time she blew she had just gotten through laying an egg, and there were two of them that had come out probably a second apart, falling directly into this little hole she had made.

P: Can you tell me the diameter?

W: The diameter of the hole was probably two inches or an inch and three-quarters, and the egg probably was an inch. It did not touch the side; she was so precise with this. She was standing when it came out of her. In other words, it was like an inch and half before it got even level with the ground. You could clearly see the egg falling. They went down this hole about four inches under the ground. That hole turned and went off to the side. So I stood there and watched her in more or less in disbelief. It was soft sand right on the shoulder of the creek, right up where the creek bank started leveling out. That turtle was huge.

P: What kind of turtle was it?

W: An alligator turtle with the ridges on her back and the kind of wart-like things from the head up there.

P: How big was she?

W: She had a big head. It was probably about thirty to thirty-six inches long and about twenty-four inches wide. I mean, we cut steaks off the head that you would not believe.

Anyway, Ruth [my wife] came down to the creek, and I had maneuvered over right close to this turtle--she was just across the fence from me. I was trying to be quiet, because I knew she was going to hear. She could not help it! She did not see the turtle, and I moved her around to where she got right back up to where the turtle was, just over the fence from her. The old turtle started "shhheew" when she laid those eggs. I said, "What is that? What is that noise? What do you reckon that is?" "I do not know what it is," she said. She looked around and saw that turtle right there at her heels, and, boy, she came out of there. She said, "What in the world is that?" I said, "That is a big alligator turtle. She is laying her eggs. Let's just stay and watch it." She laid some more eggs, and, of course, my wife settled back down.