

P: So the turtle would go down flat on her underside after she laid them?

W: Right. After she laid them, she would just sit right down on the ground.

P: And how long did she rest?

W: She would rest probably about two minutes, maybe three. Sometimes she would rest four minutes, but never more than four; usually about two or three minutes. And then she would just gradually rise up again. She would just gradually come up till she reached full height, legs stretched out and on her toes. She looked like she was straining, and then "chung, chung"--two eggs would come, and then "shhheew," like boy, that was really a relief. Then she would sit down on the ground again.

Finally she was through; she just quit. We had watched her lay probably twenty or twenty-five eggs. I do not know how many more she had laid before we got there, but I am sure we saw her lay around eighteen or twenty-two, maybe twenty-five.

When she got through, I told Ruth, "Well, now she is through laying eggs. All we have to do is cover those eggs up, and we have ourselves a big, fat turtle here with about forty pounds of meat." It was delicious. I kind of hated to kill the old turtle that way, because you know she had labored so hard laying those eggs, but I knew she was like anything else in laying season. Whenever an animal has little ones or when they lay or anything like that, I knew she was probably at her peak as far as being fat and good meat.

P: Is that the best time to get meat, generally, when it is laying season?

W: It is like a mullet. Have you ever seen a mullet with roe in it? That is when they are the fattest that they ever are. It is nature's way of providing for them, to take care of their young and everything. They get round and fat, and then they will have their little ones or lay their eggs. Just like a brim, a shell cracker, or a perch, they are always at their very fattest when they lay.

P: And that is the best time to eat them.

W: That is the best time to eat them, when they are fat. They are juicy, good, and delicious.

P: You are making me hungry for recipes.

W: So I climbed over the fence and got this big old turtle. I thought she was through laying, and she was; she did not