

In almost all of even the better known fossil tortoises, the skull remains unknown. In only a few are the limbs and girdles known. Type specimens are widely scattered in collections, and no worker has ever seen a majority of both the fossil and Recent forms.

This multiplicity of species and the inadequacy or inaccessibility of the fossil material make the assessment of phyletic relationships even more theoretical and tentative than in most other checklists, but it is felt a complete set of named forms, arranged to suggest relationships that can be tested, will add something pertinent and perhaps decisive to the present mass of nonintegrated detail. Accordingly the following is submitted with a full understanding of its transitory status, because even with its shortcomings the time seems right for such a summary. It is hoped that its availability will stimulate contributions, particularly in the fossil forms that otherwise might not be forthcoming for many years.

#### METHODS AND DEFINITIONS

My primary objective has been to list those species of fossil turtles that are now, or have sometime in the past been considered as belonging to the family Testudinidae. I have followed no particular rule for including inadequately known fossil species in this family. In many cases the final criterion was similarity of shape or ornamentation of various osteological elements between these and known testudinids.

All extant Recent genera are included for convenience. Extant species are listed only if they have also been reported as prehistoric fossils.

To make this checklist more useful, the particular set of ground rules to which I have adhered must be stated:

(1) Use of parentheses: The International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature are clear on this point (Article 23) and have been followed throughout. The rule states that parentheses are to be used only to indicate the changes prescribed, not indiscriminately to indicate any change of combination.

(2) The synonymy includes a reference to the original description or use of each name. These are usually listed chronologically.

(3) The nature and location of type specimens, as well as type localities and horizons, are cited for each species wherever possible.

(4) Both geographic and geologic ranges are provided for each taxon. In many instances geologic age is revised from that of the original work in accordance with more recent standard references on the nomenclature and correlation of continental fossiliferous deposits.

(5) Our knowledge of fossil tortoises is actually quite meager, so it is impossible to place each taxon in a definite phyletic position at this time. The arrangement of all genera, subgenera, and species is alphabetic rather than phyletic.

(6) The large number of species listed (206) may lead some to believe that I have recognized an unduly large proportion of species names. In general I have preserved names for many presently questionable forms until there is some proof that they represent variant or aberrant individuals. I have taken certain liberties in synonymizing Tertiary forms from both Europe and Asia. For the names of Recent forms I follow mainly Williams (1952) and Loveridge and Williams (1957). The question of subspecific relationship for the fossil populations is impossible to determine on the basis of intergradation, and therefore morphological similarity remains the sole criterion on which my judgments are based.

A wide possible range in degree of distinctness usually occurs between the genera, subgenera, or species of fossil and Recent forms. The number and kinds of differ-