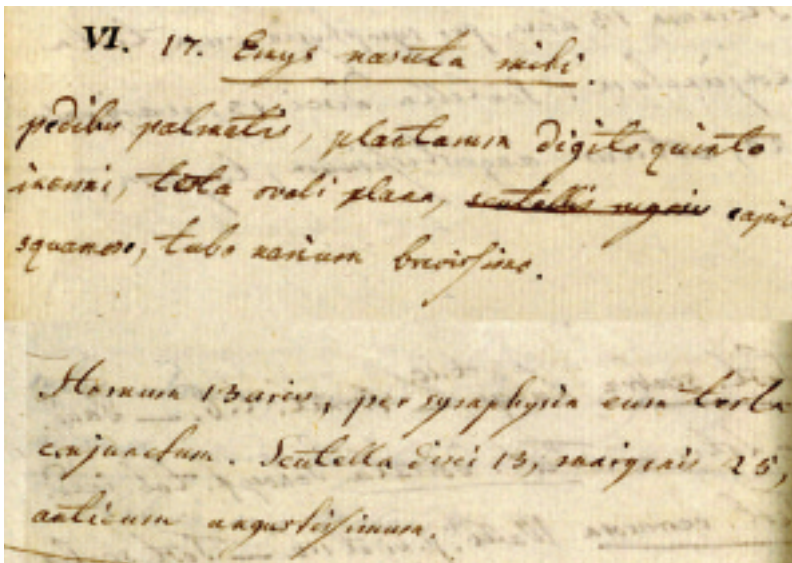


The Holotype of *Emys nasuta* SCHWEIGGER, 1812

by R. BOUR

Emys nasuta SCHWEIGGER, 1812 (at present also known as *Mesoclemmys nasuta*, *Phrynops nasutus* or *Batrachemys nasuta*) was renamed *Platemys schweiggeri*, a replacement name by DUMÉRIL & BIBRON (1835: 435). It was a deserved homage to August Friedrich SCHWEIGGER, murdered in Sicily some fourteen years earlier. SCHWEIGGER worked under Constant DUMÉRIL's supervision in



VI. 17. *Emys nasuta mibi*
 [6th species of *Emys*, 17th of all turtles]
 Pedibus palmatis, plantarum digito quinto
 inermi, testa ovali plana, scutellis rugosis capite
 squamoso, tubo narium brevissimo.
 Sternum 13 areis, per symphysin cum testa
 conjunctum. Scutella disci 13, marginis 25,
 anticum angustissimum.

Emys nasuta by myself

Webbed feet, fifth finger of the soles
 clawless, shell flat and oval, rough scutes head
 scaly, tube of nostrils very short.
 Plastron with 13 areas, by suture with the shell
 attached. Disc of 13 scutes, 25 on the border,
 the anterior one very narrow.

Figure 1. Handwritten description of *Emys nasuta* by SCHWEIGGER (1809; ms 2627, MNHN, Central Library).

BOUR: The Holotype of *Emys nasuta*



Figure 2. Holotype of *Emys nasuta* SCHWEIGGER, 1812. Hatchling, MNHN 4140. Carapace length: 59 mm (2.3").

(Photograph: R. BOUR.)

1808 and 1809, and the first written description of *Emys nasuta* still exists in manuscript form (Figure 1). Both specific names are based on the same specimen (the holotype), a hatchling of unknown source: in the original description of *Emys nasuta*, SCHWEIGGER (1812: 298; 338) wrote “*Patria ignota*”. DUMÉRIL & BIBRON precised it as “*Amérique méridionale*”, but it is unknown whether they really were able to get some extra data, or they simply decided to state that by inference of similar turtles with known localities.

At that time several species of South American turtles were already represented in the Paris Museum, most of them collected by Louis-Claude Marie RICHARD (1754–1821) in French Guyana (“Cayenne”) or surrounding areas, others by Jean-Baptiste LEBLOND (1747–1815) also in French Guyana, and by François LEVAILLANT (1753–1824) in Surinam, while the remaining were brought back by GEOFFROY SAINT-HILAIRE from the Lisbon collections in 1808. LEBLOND or LEVAILLANT are the most probable collectors of the holotype of *Emys nasuta*.

The specific epithet *nasuta* (from *nasus* = nose) is a reference to the conspicuous snout, “*tubo narium cylindrico*” (tube of the nares cylindrical) and “*naso tuberculato, in cylindrum brevem protracto*”

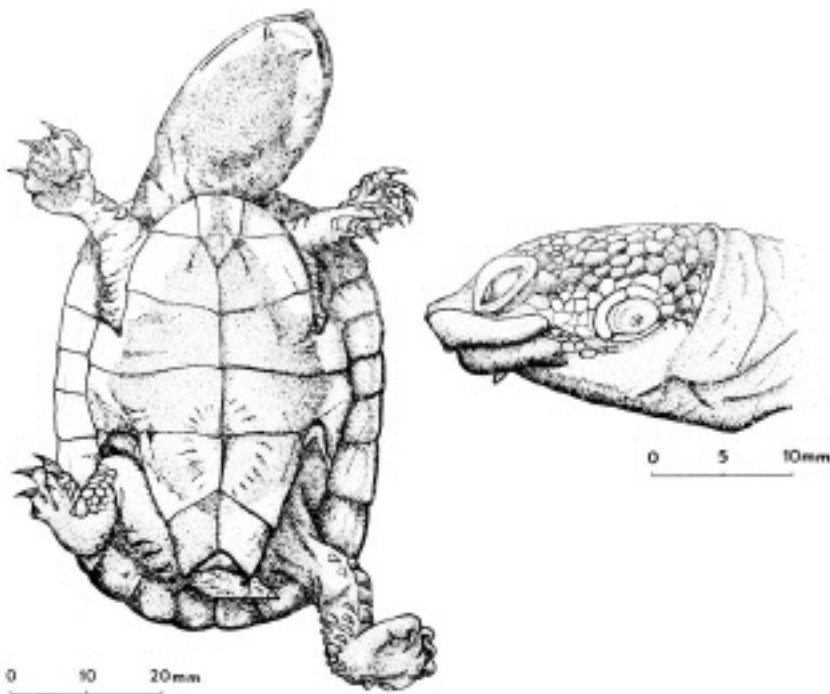


Figure 3. Holotype of *Emys nasuta* SCHWEIGGER, 1812.

(Drawings by Jacques FRETEY [modified after LESCURE & FRETEY 1976]).

	Schweigger	Duméril & Bibron	MNHN 4140
Carapace length	2 poll. 2 lin. = 58.5 mm (2.30")	63 mm (2.5")	59 mm (2.3")
Carapace width	– 5 lin. = 47.3 mm (1.86")	50 mm (2.0")	45 mm (1.8")
Shell depth	– 7 lin. = 15.8 mm (0.62")	15 mm (0.6")	18 mm (0.7")
Plastron length (maximal)	1 poll. 9 lin. = 47.3 mm (1.86")	48 mm (1.9")	47 mm (1.9")
Plastron length (median)	–	–	44 mm (1.7")
Bridge length	–	–	11.5 mm (0.45")
Head width	– 5 lin.* = 11.3 mm (0.44")	18 mm (0.7")	17.8 mm (0.70")

Table 1. Measurements of the holotype of *Emys nasuta* SCHWEIGGER, 1812 according to SCHWEIGGER (1812) and DUMÉRIL & BIBRON (1835), and taken on specimen MNHN 4140. Its shell is soft and presently rather distorted, which may help to explain the observed discrepancies. 1 poll. [pollex] is 1 French inch of approximately 27 mm (1.1").

* “5 lin.” is probably a misprint for 8 lines (= 18 mm [0.7"]).

(nose forming a tubercle, projecting as a short cylinder) according to SCHWEIGGER. SCHWEIGGER, as well as DUMÉRIL & BIBRON, also provided measurements (Table 1). After their descriptions, there was a wide gap in the story of this specimen, until its “rediscovery” (BOUR 1973): the hatchling was found to be present in the Paris collections under MNHN.4140, in a jar probably sealed since DUMÉRIL & BIBRON’s era. Several scutes are missing today, and the colors have faded, but the typical central dark figure on the plastron, as well as the dark triangles under the rear marginal scutes are still conspicuous. The shell is laterally constricted, perhaps as an artifact of a narrower jar in which it has previously been stored (Figure 2).

Similarly to *Mesoclemmys gibba* (SCHWEIGGER, 1812), the taxonomic and nomenclatural history of *Emys nasuta* is far from clear and seven generic names have at times been proposed to include this species: *Emys* DUMÉRIL, 1806, *Hydraspis* BELL, 1828, *Platemys* WAGLER, 1830, *Rhinemys* WAGLER, 1830, *Phrynops* WAGLER, 1830, *Mesoclemmys* GRAY, 1873 and *Batrachemys* STEJNEGER, 1909 (of which *Emys nasuta* is the type species by original designation). In the last review of the species BOUR & ZAHER (2005) assigned it to the genus *Mesoclemmys*.

The species was confused with several related taxa because of the absence of reference to this type specimen. FROES (1957) separated *M. nasuta* from *M. tuberculata* (LUEDERWALDT, 1926). LESCURE & FRETEY (1976) made a comparison of the type specimen with another hatchling from Mts. Atachi-Baca, French Guyana (MNHN 1974.1003) and restricted the type locality to “*Guyanes et nord-est de l’Amazonie*”; at the same time they provided a drawing of the type specimen (Fig. 2). BOUR & PAULER (1983) published a ventral view figure of the holotype, separated *M. nasuta* from *M. raniceps*, and concluded that *M. nasuta* is an endemic from the southern half of the Guianas and restricted its type locality to “*rivières Ouaqui et Inini, bassin du Maroni en amont de Maripasoula, Guyane française*”.

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