

In the course of study of a series of *Leptotyphlops* a somewhat similar condition has been noted in a specimen of *L. humilis cabuila* Klauber from Laguna Dam, Imperial County, California, received through the kindness of Dr. J. R. Slevin. The snake (Univ. Ill. Mus. Nat. Hist. No. 35910) had been cleared in KOH and glycerine and the skeleton stained with alizarin before attention was drawn to a small mass of very fine sand apparently embedded in the skin on each side of the body in the pelvic region. On closer examination the sand was seen to partially fill a canal containing the claw, the tip of which rested just below the level of the epidermis.

In the *L. nigricans* reported by Essex the perforations in the skin are shown (*op. cit.*, fig. 39, D) to have the form of a scale, as if a complete scale were absent on each side. In the present specimen the scales in that immediate area are irregular in shape and the pore is surrounded by a pair of scales (fig. 3).

The *L. nigricans* was an adult male with fully developed testes. Essex considered this significant and suggested the possibility that "the claw may protrude only at the breeding season, being used for copulation," presumably as are the spurs of boas and pythons in courtship. And "If this be so, it will account for very few specimens taken with protruding claws."

The *L. b. cabuila*, however, is not only a female but its length of 215 mm. is considerably less than that of mature (egg-laying) females of the species. Moreover, it seems unlikely that periodic appearance and withdrawal would alone account for the extreme rarity of such external claws. Unless further study shows them to be more common it would seem best to consider these protruding claws of worm snakes as simply an atavistic variation persisting from ancestral stages in which they were normally better developed.

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THE GENERIC NAME OF THE ALLIGATOR SNAPPER TURTLE.—All six editions of the checklists of North American amphibians and reptiles have used the generic name *Macrochelys* for the alligator snapper, correctly citing Gray, 1856 (Jan. 22 fide Stejneger and Barbour, Checklist N. Amer. Amph. Rept., 1917:113) (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1855:200) as the original source. Actually Gray proposed the name *Macroclemys* for this genus a year earlier (Cat. Shield Rept., 1855:48), as noted by William (Breviora, No. 2: 5, 12, 1952) in connection with a synopsis of fossil forms of the Chelydridae.

The year of publication of the names *Macroclemys* (1855) and *Macrochelys* (1856) is agreed upon by Boulenger (Cat. Chel., Rhynch., Croc. Brit. Mus., 1889: iii, 23) and the two most recent generic indices (Neave, 1940, Nomencl. Zool., 3: 10, 11; Schulze *et al.*, 1932, Nomencl. Anim., 3: 1936-7). Application of the Law of Priority accordingly requires usage of *Macroclemys*, the earlier name, for this genus. Request for suspension of the rules does not seem warranted in view of the similarity of the two names. The living species should thus be known as *Macroclemys temmincki* (Troost).—Hobart M. Smith, Dept. Zoology, Univ. Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.