

this, but to the turtle dove; the Mud Turtle is believed to be mute, except for the slight hiss it utters on retiring into its shell.

SNAPPING TURTLE OR SNAPPER,
Chelydra serpentina (Linn).

In 1848, Richardson wrote: "As a contribution to what is known of the geographical distribution of reptiles, on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, frogs may be set down as attaining the 68th parallel of latitude; snakes as reaching the 56th; and tortoises as disappearing beyond the 51st, at the south end of Lake Winnipeg. There the *Emys geographica* of Le Seur [probably this refers to the preceding *C. m. bellii*] named Asaté by the Chippeways, occurs; and also, one with a flexible neck, called by the same people, *Mishinnah*, which is probably the Snapping Turtle." (Arc. Search. Expd. 1851. Vol. I., p. 204).

The first and only Snapper I ever saw in Manitoba, was taken in the Assiniboine, near the Little Souris, in 1896, by John S. Charleson (now in possession of John Riddington, of Winnipeg). It was 30 inches long; the shell 12 inches long and 11½ inches wide. I have heard of several specimens taken near Winnipeg, but the species must be considered rare in Manitoba; for this we should be thankful, for it is a ferocious reptile of great strength and insatiable appetite. It preys on fish, ducks, goslings, and, indeed, all aquatic animals big enough for its food and smaller than itself. I have seen this turtle take down a full-grown duck, seizing it by the legs from below; and, as an ordinary Snapper weighs ten or fifteen pounds, the duck, one-quarter his weight, has no chance of escape.

The nest of this turtle is much like that of the foregoing, but its eggs are larger and less round, and more numerous, as those of a single nest often number as high as two dozen.

In the latter part of August, 1917, a pile of building-sand was dumped about 100 feet from the lake on my land at Greenwich, Connecticut. Next morning, we found six good-sized Snappers on it. They were each about six or eight pounds in weight. We found no eggs and could see no reason for their congregating there, or how they all found it so quickly.

The Snapper is of very slow growth. The enormous specimens sometimes found are undoubtedly of great age.

COMMON GARTERSNAKE,
Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis (Say).

This Gartersnake is found at least throughout the southern half of Manitoba. I expect to find it in every part of the province, for Preble found it

common about Edmonton, Alta. (N. A. Fauna No. 27, p. 500). I got two specimens in the Salt River County, near Great Slave river; and Richardson records it north to lat. 56, near Isle a la Grosse, Arctic Search. Exp., Vol. I., p. 98. In a footnote, p. 204, *ibid*, he records the killing of a snake on "Porcupine river far within the Arctic Circle." It is readily recognized by the two black stripes separated by green, that run the whole length of its body.

It is about two feet long when fully grown, but specimens over thirty inches long have been found. Though a small snake, it is the largest of those that have hitherto been found in the province.

It is perfectly harmless, and its usual prey is frogs, minnows and insects.

Near Carberry, I once heard a loud squealing, in a marsh. On going near, I saw a frog with a Gartersnake holding to its hind legs. The frog was kicking with the other leg and, at the same time, clinging to a tuft of grass with his arms and squealing lustily. According to the laws of the chase, he belonged to the Gartersnake; but the ancient quarrel of man and the snake put me on the side of the frog, and I saved his life.

When camping at Lake Winnipegosis in 1904, I was warned not to go near Snake Island, as it was "swarming with all kinds of venomous snakes." That was enough; I made straight for Snake Island, and camped there a day-and-a-half, with my friend E. W. Darbey, but saw only four harmless Gartersnakes. When we left the place, and were over two miles away, we found in the water two snakes swimming toward the island. They seemed perfectly at home in the water, and I doubt not the rocky cliffs of the island furnish attractive winter dens that bring many snakes from their summer range in the far-reaching marshy shores of the adjoining parts of Lake Winnipegosis.

There are several places in the province that are, or were, noted for their vast congregations of Gartersnakes, one of the most famous being that at Stony Mountain. These places are usually high, dry, rocky dens, surrounded by a region of swamps; the latter furnish the snakes with a congenial summer range, and the former a dry denning place for hibernation.

There is no doubt that Stony Mountain was an island at one stage of the ancient Lake Agassiz; as the lake grew shallow and marshy, the snakes would increase. The island became a natural gathering-place, and the annual resort thither of the snakes *en masse* to-day is, possibly, an instinctive local migration, established in those remote times.

In the early fall of 1881 or 1882, I am told, there was a general and fierce prairie fire between Winnipeg and Stony Mountain. After it, thousands of