

ormous size and weight, some individuals measuring six or seven feet in length from the tip of the nose to the extremity of the tail, by three or four feet broad, and weighing as much as eight hundred pounds. Dampier says, "I heard of a monstrous green turtle once taken at Port Royal, in the bay of Campeachy, that was four feet deep from the back of the belly and the belly six feet broad. Captain Rocky's son, of about nine or ten years of age, went in it (meaning in the shell) as in a boat, on board his father's ship, about a quarter of a mile from the shore."—The green tortoise commonly weighs from two to three hundred pounds.

The instinct which leads the female turtle to the shore to lay her eggs, exposes her to the danger of becoming the prey of man. She deposits her eggs on the loose sand, and abandons them at once to the chance, which approaches almost to a certainty in the southern hemisphere, that they will be hatched by the influence of the sun's rays. She digs, by means of her forefeet, one or more holes about a foot wide and two feet deep, in which she usually deposits more than one hundred eggs. These eggs are round, and are two or three inches in diameter; they are covered with a membrane something like wet parchment.—The female generally lays three times in each year, at intervals of about a fortnight or three weeks. They almost always go ashore in the night time. A loose sand being essential to the hatching of the eggs, the turtles frequent only peculiar shores; but these are often several hundred miles from their feeding places. The eggs are hatched in less than a month after they are laid; and in about eight or ten days, the young reptiles crawl to the water. Few, however, reach their native element, in proportion to the number produced. They become the prey of sea-fowl and various quadrupeds of prey. The tiger is an especial enemy to the tortoise; but man is still more actively engaged in their destruction. The collection of tortoise eggs forms one of the most important of the occupations of the Indians of the Orinoco.