

NOTE ON TURTLES.—I venture to point out some inaccuracies that have crept into Mr. Thompson Seton's comments on Turtles in the November number of THE OTTAWA NATURALIST.

The eggs of the Eastern Painted Turtle can scarcely be described as "nearly round"; they are decidedly elongate in shape. The number to a nest in this district is from eight to ten. I have no exact data on the incubation period of the Painted Turtle, but have reason to believe that—in the Ottawa Valley at least—it is much longer than two weeks. In the statement Mr. Thompson Seton quotes from Agassiz: "The Painted Turtle has an almost identical period of incubation with the Snapping Turtle, namely, from the 11th to the 25th June", the word "incubation" is evidently a mistake for "oviposition". Both turtles lay about the middle of June, but the young of the Snapping Turtle certainly do not emerge from the shell until September or October; and even then, as far as my experience goes, they remain buried in the sand until the following spring.

Again, the egg of the Snapping Turtle is not "less round" than that of the Painted Turtle, for it is perfectly spherical. And the number of eggs to a nest may often be as many as fifty. Five nests of which I have record contained respectively 39, 45, 49, 50 and 51 eggs. Half a dozen other nests not so carefully counted contained manifestly similar numbers. I have never seen a nest with as few as two dozen eggs in it.

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ADDITIONAL NOTES ON MANITOBA TURTLES, SNAKES AND BATRACHIANS.—Mr. Thompson Seton has provided us with a very useful contribution in the November number of THE OTTAWA NATURALIST which every Manitoban interested in wild life will appreciate. A residence of more than thirty years in the province enables me to add a few facts which are presented below.

The Western Hog-nosed Snake, *Heterodon nasicus* B. and G. It is rather surprising that this interesting snake has not been recorded. It was taken by my father, Percy Criddle, in about 1884, and has since been observed on many occasions at Aweme and surrounding places. A very fine example was presented to me, as a rare insect, in a net, some years ago by that friend of every young naturalist, the late Dr. James Fletcher, who in company with Mr. J. B. Wallis captured it in the sand hills near Onah. This snake's habit of shamming death is well known. Among those unacquainted with its harmlessness it is credited with being a "puff adder" giving forth a deadly vapour from its

mouth, this being supposedly demonstrated by the habit the snake has of flattening itself out while hissing. There are probably few reptiles that can show a bolder face and yet are so little able to put their threats into practice.

The Garter Snake is one of those that protects its young by taking them into its mouth. Naturalists used to be sceptical as to this acclaimed habit, which is a fact nevertheless. The practice has been witnessed more than once by us in Manitoba.

In addition to the Hog-nosed Snake we have at least one Swift, *Sceloparus* sp? which inhabits wet or low lands.

The Mud-Puppy, *Necturus maculosus*, occurs in all the rivers of southern Manitoba, being probably much commoner than is generally supposed, as the examples taken are usually secured on a fish-hook.

The distribution of the Snapping Turtle, *C. serpentina*, is also of considerable extent along rivers and I have seen examples as far west as eastern Saskatchewan in the Souris river.

On July 10, 1918, I came across a large example of the Painted Turtle, *C. marginata belli*, which had crawled over a wide extent of sand in search of a "nesting" site. It was at rest on some ground juniper, *J. procumbens*, when secured but no indications of a "nest" were visible. The turtle was fully a mile away from the nearest water, the Rice lake, Onah, and had been obliged to climb various steep hills in her journey towards the sand.

NORMAN CRIDDLE.

RAILWAYS IN THE OTTAWA VALLEY.—Respecting Mr. Keele's articles on the "Location of Towns and Villages in the Ottawa Valley", printed in THE OTTAWA NATURALIST, November, 1918, Mr. James White, of the Commission of Conservation, points out that: The first railway line into the Ottawa valley was the Prescott and Ottawa, or, to use the original name, the Prescott and Bytown railway. This line was opened for traffic December, 1854. The Brockville and Ottawa, later, the Canada Central, was opened from Brockville to Almonte in August, 1859, and the branch from Smith's Falls to Perth was completed in February of the same year. The extension from Almonte to Sand Point was completed prior to 1867.

Later, a line was constructed from Carleton Place eastward to Ottawa, and the line to Almonte was extended northward to Pembroke via Pakenham, Arnprior and Renfrew.

The Canadian Pacific purchased the Canada Central in 1881, and included the portion of this line from Ottawa to Pembroke in its transcontinental line, thereafter operating the portion between Carleton Place and Brockville as the Brockville branch.