

Turtle Finds Happy Home In Asheville Zoo

By NANCY ALEXANDER
The telephone rang one afternoon last week. A voice explained, "This is Mrs. Ray Coffey on the Morganton Road in the Gamewell section. We caught a 17½ pound turtle while we were fishing at Mortimer."

"It's the largest turtle we've ever seen around here. We were wondering if you might know if the Asheville Zoo might like to have it."

We replied, "I don't know, but it probably would. They have about everything else. Perhaps I can see it before you take it up there."

Since our childhood days when we captured wandering terrapins and kept them in boxes, the crusty plodders have fascinated us.

The next day we saw the old character, settled in the bottom of a barrel. A tremendous fellow he was.

We took with us some information by which we identified him as a yellow-bellied turtle, though he kept his belly hidden and we saw only markings on his body.

The yellow-bellied turtle is known as the slider or cooter and is the most common large turtle found in ponds, lakes, and rivers in North Carolina. They're often seen sunning on stumps and logs in water.

The yellow-bellied, like other turtles, lays its eggs on land. They dig a hole in the sand, lay the eggs, cover them, camouflaging the place well, returning to the water carefully avoiding leaving a trail, and promptly goes her own way, forsaking her young.

Turtles, tortoises and terrapins are confusing terms.

The late C. S. Brimley explained it this way: "The word 'turtle' which was originally only applied to the marine turtles is now the one most generally applied to the whole group, the term 'tortoise' is seldom applied to any but the land and fresh-water species, and most usually to the former; the name terrapin is in the northern United States applied only to edible salt-marsh species, but in the south is used as a general term to include all the land and fresh-water species except the snapping turtle and the soft-shells."

As someone has said, "The turtle doesn't get anywhere until it sticks its neck out of its shell, which should be a lesson to most people."

The upper shell or shield is called the carapace, and the lower or ventral one is the plastron. Turtles have no teeth but the jaws are covered with a horny sheath which generally has sharp, cutting edges. It has two eye lids and a nictitating membrane (a thin film that can be extended to cover the eyeball. In a few turtles, breathing is normal in our terms of reference, but in most they gulp or swallow air.

Turtles are both aquatic and terrestrial. In the truly aquatic kinds such as the marine tur-

ties, the legs are modified into flippers, while the pond and stream turtles have webbed feet. Some large marine turtles may attain a weight of 1-

000 pounds and be more than 6 feet in length. The Ray Coffeys took their yellow-bellied turtle to the Asheville Zoo where he is now

comfortably and happily ensconced with the animals that were transported from the Catawba Valley Zoo near Granite Falls.

YMW Club Delegates Attend Banquet

Georgia Smitherman, Jean Cook, and Jean Smitherman of the Watauga YMW Club attended the Southwestern and Western District Banquet Saturday night, May 11, at Bame's Res-

taurant, Barber, N. C. There were nine counties represented, with 95 YMW Club members and their sponsors from the district. The Rowan County YMW Club served as host for the banquet. A delicious meal was served. Recreation was enjoyed

by all with the musical entertainment presented by the "China Mugs" of Salisbury. Anyone out of high school between the ages of 18-plus are invited to visit the Watauga YMW Club meetings.

Macmillan speech stirs talk of '63 election.
Erhard bars move to seize reins ahead of time.
Pianist finds U. S. music gaining in Soviet.



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DENTIST DRILLS MISSILE

Tucson, Ariz. — A missile turned up to be the "patient" of a dentist. Dr. Robert Ratcliffe was called to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base to remove a broken draft pin from a 103-foot-long Tital I intercontinental ballistic missile.

The machine shop did not have a drill delicate enough to remove the broken pin. The dentist removed the pin after two hours drilling and two broken drills.

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