

SOME NOTES ON THE HABITS OF THE COMMON BOX TURTLE
(*Cistudo Carolina*).

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During the latter part of last July, while passing through an extensive tract of woodland in the so-called "Flats" or "Slashes" of Jefferson county, I noticed a very unusual number of the common box turtle in a pool of muddy water. The pool was less than ten feet in diameter and was frequented by a number of hogs as a wallow.

On removing from the pool the turtles, some of which were visible and others completely buried in the soft mud, I counted seventy-two. They were all sizes from two or three inches in length up to eight inches. The largest had the number 1867 carved on its under side, the number in all probability having been placed there during that year.

The number of these animals found in this pool is certainly remarkable. I have spent many hours in the woods and fields of Jefferson and other counties of southeastern Indiana, and have never, until on this occasion, seen more than two or three of these turtles together, or, in fact, during any one day.

The explanation of this unusually large gathering of these turtles is probably found in the intense heat of the ten days or two weeks preceding the date of their observation. Although the soil was not at all dry, the heat probably drove them to the pool from all sides. On the same day I observed two other turtles burying themselves in a muddy spot but a foot or so in diameter.

When I had returned the animals to the pool, and while observing them from a distance a number of hogs approached, and in a few moments several of the largest had each picked up a turtle and were endeavoring to crush the shells. I watched the performance with considerable interest, as I had previously supposed that forest fires were about the only enemy of these turtles. To my surprise the largest hogs, after many attempts, and with a noise as though cracking walnuts, succeeded in crushing the

shells, and surrounded by a group of smaller animals of their kind, squealing for a share, they ate the contents with evident satisfaction.

I drove the hogs away, but on revisiting the place a few hours later I found that the hogs had returned, and that they had crushed and eaten the greater number of the smaller turtles, and some that were as much as six inches in length.

From these observations it would seem that the hog has been one of the principal enemies of this turtle, and that in recent years, since few hogs have been allowed to range the woods and fields, the box turtle has been rapidly increasing in number.