

SECTION IV.

THE FAMILY OF TRIONYCHIDÆ.

This family was first distinguished by J. E. Gray, and afterwards adopted by Bell, Fitzinger, Wiegman, Canino, and Duméril and Bibron, while Wagler unites it with the other fresh-water Turtles.¹

The form of the Trionychidæ resembles a flat orbicular disc, slightly elongated, with a long, pointed head projecting upon a long, slender neck, and two pairs of limbs, one before and the other behind, with broad, webbed feet moving horizontally.

The body is low, flattened, and spread out wide. The upper surface nowhere arches high above the outer edge, either crosswise or lengthwise. The middle line above, along the dorsal vertebral column, or rather the cord of its slightly curved arc, is very nearly parallel to the flat lower surface upon which the body rests. From this middle line the upper surface descends slowly on either side toward the outer edge, lowest about the shoulders in the arch of the third pair of ribs, less and less backward, until over the pelvic region the arch is very slight. As this line is parallel to the base upon which the body rests, the outer edge of the shield rises as the upper surface flattens, that is, from the shoulders backward. At the shoulders it is but little above the flattened part of the lower surface, so that there the bulk of the body is above the plastron and within the arch of the carapace, while at the hind end it is below the carapace and within the inverted arch of the plastron. The opening in the shield for the protrusion of the limbs and tail about the hind end is as high or higher than that about the front end for the protrusion of the head and front limbs. The body is bluntly curved about the front end; it is much broader across the shoulders than across the pelvis, and more pointed behind than before, but the projection of the marginal rim beyond the body gives very different proportions to the carapace. This rim pro-

¹ This family corresponds exactly to the genus *Trionyx* of Geoffroy, from which its present name is derived. Gray writes the family name *Trionichidæ*, (*Ann. Phil.* 1825,) and *Trionychidæ*, (*Cat. Brit. Mus.* 1844;) as also does Canino, (*Suggio An. Vert.* 1831.) Bell writes it *Trionichidæ*, (*Zool. Jour.* 1828.) Fitzinger has it *Trionychoiden*, (*Neue Classif.* 1826.)

Wiegmann changed the name to *Chilota*, (*Handb. Zool.* 1832.) Duméril and Bibron introduced a third name for this same family, calling it *Potamides*, (*Ervôt. génér.* 1835.) The name borrowed from the genus *Trionyx*, having the priority over those of Duméril and Bibron, and of Wiegmann, must be retained; but it must be spelled *TRIONYCHIDÆ*.