

In the fresh state, this cavity is prolonged by a membranous snout, as in *Trionyx*. The lower jaw is thin, excepting at the condyles, where it is thickened on the inner side to a nearly spherical form; the articulating ball projects somewhat higher than the upper edge, but it is lower than the lower edge of the jaw just before it; it rolls by a broad and long convex surface on the articulating surface above. The jaw rises forward to the coronal angle, where it is so high and broad that its upper edge rises above the top of that part of the skull which it incloses; from the angle forward it is small and blunt, and fits closely into the alveolar depression above. The tongue bones are largely developed, and make a broad, firm floor under the cavity of the mouth.

Most of the many peculiarities of the head are clearly connected with the form of the mouth, and thus with the kind of food, and manner of catching and devouring it. The jaws are weak, and neither pointed nor sharp-edged; and therefore unfit for catching large, active prey, or tearing any tough vegetable or animal matter. The mouth is broad but very close, when its roof and floor are brought near together; it seems on that account best fitted for catching and swallowing minute animals. The mode of articulating of the lower jaw, and the large size of the depression in the mastoids for the digastric muscle, indicate perhaps that the jaws are opened and shut quickly and continuously with a movement somewhat like that of a duck's bill. The legs are strong, and the feet broad and compact, with long, sharp claws.

This family contains a single genus, well known under the name of *Chelys*. It embraces only a single species, called *Matamata* in tropical South America, where it is common. Its habits are little known. From the resemblance of this Turtle to the *Chelydroïdæ* and the *Trionychnidæ*, I am inclined, however, to infer that, like these, it lays spherical eggs.

The family first described by Fitzinger under the name of *Hydraspides*¹ was soon afterwards united, by J. E. Gray,² with the *Chelyoidæ*; but I believe this to be a mistake,³ if I am permitted to express an opinion after having had so few

¹ Fitzinger, Syst. Rept., 1843, 8vo.

² J. E. Gray, Cat. Brit. Mus., 1844, 8vo.

³ It has already been remarked in a note, p. 335, that the Turtles united as one natural group under the names of *Chelididæ*, or *Elodites Pleurodères*, do not constitute a natural family, but embrace a number of families, linked together by the peculiar structure of the neck, and besides by the close connection between the pelvis and the carapace and plastron. Of these families I have only been able to examine the

Chelyoidæ proper with sufficient precision to ascertain fully their family characters. I take, however, this opportunity to call the attention of herpetologists to the differences I have thus far noticed among the other groups. I have already stated above, that, as the *Chelyoidæ* proper recall the *Chelydroïdæ*, the *Sternotheroidæ* form in the same manner the counterpart of the *Cinosternoidæ*, while *Pelomedusa* and *Pentonyx* remind us of the true *Emydoidæ*. The *Hydraspides*, restricted to the genera *Platemys*, *Rhinc-*