

Chelodina longicollis (Eastern snake-necked turtle)

Description in life:

Long neck which completely retracts when required for protection or sleep (except hatchlings). Upper neck surface covered with small, distinct small lumps (tubercles). Small fleshy projections (barbels) may be present under chin. Four claws on all limbs. Prefers wetlands and dams, also found in rivers and creeks. Occasionally seen basking on logs or rocks. May travel overland between water bodies. Emits strong odour when threatened.



Shell description:

Carapace to 260mm, oval in shape, broad at front and flared at rear. Vertebral scutes may be depressed to form a groove. Marginal scutes immediately over tail are raised. Front of plastron extends beyond inner edges of marginal scutes of carapace. Gular shields in contact, completely enclosing the intergular shields. Deep 'V' shaped rear notch in plastron (males very sharp, females more rounded). Plastron scutes usually heavily outlined with black.



Chelodina expansa (Broad-shelled river turtle)

Description in life:

Long, thick neck which partially retracts when required for protection or sleep. No small lumps (tubercles) on neck but skin surface granulated. Head strongly depressed. No fleshy projections (barbels) present under chin. Four claws on all limbs. Occasionally seen basking on logs or rocks. May travel overland to a nesting site or to a different water hole.



Shell description:

Carapace to 480mm, oval in shape with expanded rear edges. Marginal scutes immediately over tail are not raised. Rear of plastron does not extend beyond inner edges of marginal scutes of carapace. Gular shields in contact with each other. 'U' shaped notch at rear of plastron.



Elseya albagula (White-throated snapping turtle)

Description in life:

Short, thick neck (creamy-white on females and typically grey on males). Robust head with well-developed head shield that does NOT extend down the sides of the head. Two prominent fleshy projections (barbels) on chin. Five claws on forelimbs, four on hindlimbs. Basks on logs and rocks. Preference for sheltering under log tangles and shaded sections of waterways.

Photo M. Connell

Female



Shell description:

Males distinctly smaller than females; female carapace to 450mm, males to 300mm. Carapace broadly oval. Nuchal scute absent. Intergular shield separates gular shields and is longer than broad. Serrated margin of carapace prominent in juveniles, persisting into early adulthood. Shallow 'U' shaped notch at rear of plastron.



Photo M. Connell

Wollumbinia latisternum (Saw-shelled turtle)

Description in life:

Short neck; upper surface covered with low, rounded small lumps (tubercles) and a variable number of higher more erect tapering tubercles. Heavy head shield extends downwards to the upper margin of the external ear surface. Normally two or four small fleshy projections (barbels) under chin. Five claws on forelimbs, four on hindlimbs. Prefers lagoons, billabongs and river headwaters. Resistant to cane toad toxin.



Photo M. Connell

Shell description:

Carapace to 300mm, oval, widening slightly at the rear. Nuchal shield mostly absent but if present is usually narrow. Serrated rear edge of carapace prominent in juveniles, prominent to weak in adults. Intergular shield separates gular shields and is longer than broad. Plastron shields may have darker outline. Shallow 'V' or 'U' shaped notch at rear of plastron.



Photo E. Ford

Emydura macquarii krefftii (Krefftt's turtle)

Description in life:

Short neck with many small, rounded lumps (tubercles) on upper surface. Head shield well developed and smooth and does NOT extend down the sides of the head. Distinctive yellow facial stripe extending from the eye to the ear covering (less obvious in old turtles). Two rounded wart-like fleshy projections (barbels) on chin. Five claws on forelimbs, four on hindlimbs. Found in rivers, swamps, and lagoons. Regularly basks. May be found moving across land between water bodies.

Shell description:

Carapace to 350mm, oval with slight widening towards the rear. Shell can become extremely dome-shaped with age. Mostly has a nuchal scute. No serrations on edges of adult shells. Rear of plastron extends beyond inner edges of marginal scutes of carapace. Intergular shield similar width to each gular shield. Shallow 'U' or 'V' shaped notch at rear of plastron.



Photo M. Connell



Photo M. Connell

Note: *Emydura macquarii nigra* (Fraser Island turtle) is smaller with dark skin and carapace and no facial stripe. This species is only found on Fraser Island.

Elusor macrurus (Mary River turtle) **Endangered**

Description in life:

Short neck with distinctive blunt lumps (tubercles) on upper surface. Heavy head shield extends downwards to the upper margin of the external ear surface. Usually two large and two smaller fleshy projections (barbels) on chin. Five claws on forelimbs, four on hindlimbs. May have pinkish tinges on hindlimbs. Female tail short and thick, male tail long and thick, up to 70% of carapace length. One of two Australian species where males are notably larger than females. Regularly basks.

Shell description:

Females distinctly smaller than males; female carapace to 340mm, males to 420mm. Carapace low and streamlined, slightly wider towards rear. Nuchal scute present. Juveniles have serrated marginal scutes along rear edge of carapace, which disappear when they reach about 200mm. Front of plastron extends beyond inner edges of marginal scutes of carapace. Intergular shield as wide as or wider than gulars. Shallow 'V' shaped notch at rear of plastron.



Photo M. Connell



Photo M. Connell



Photo E. Ford



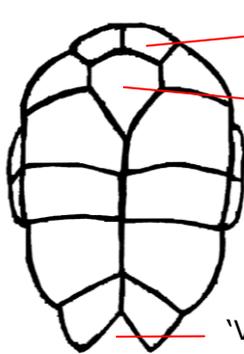
Photo M. Connell

Plastron
(lower portion of shell)

Gular shields **in contact**
with each other

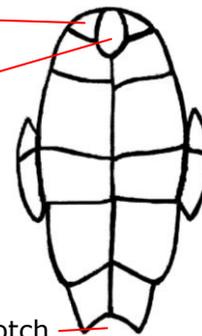
Gular shields **separated**
by intergular shield

Fig. A



'V' shaped rear notch

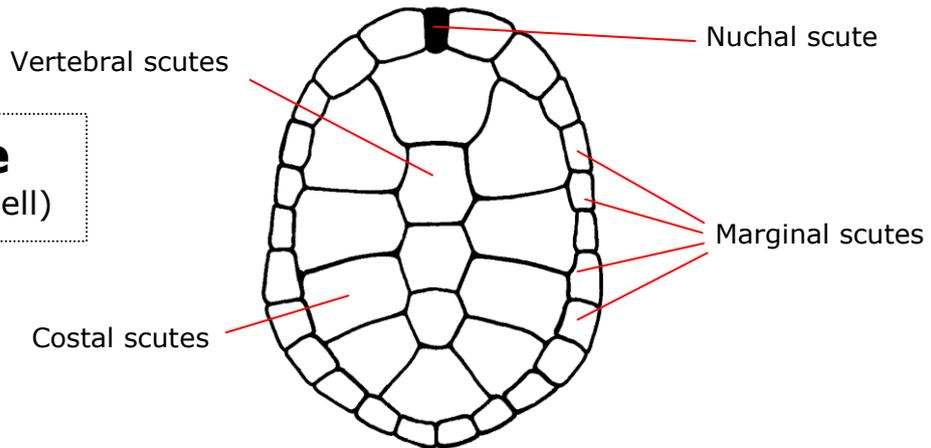
Fig. B



'U' shaped rear notch

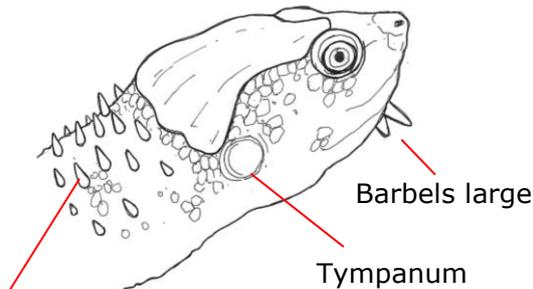
Carapace
(top portion of shell)

Fig. C



Head shield **extending**
down the sides of the head

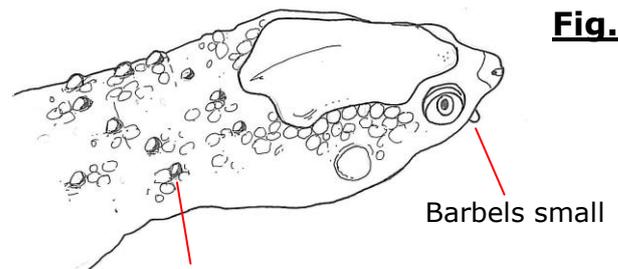
Fig. D



Tubercles tall, tapering

Head shield **NOT extending**
down the sides of the head

Fig. E



Tubercles short, squat