

Hydrochelys picta WAGLER, 1821:
a junior synonym of *Chrysemys*
picta picta (SCHNEIDER, 1783)

Recently, SCHMIDTLER (2007) reviewed the scientific opus of Johannes (Jean) Georg WAGLER (1800–1832). Nonetheless, it has hardly been noted that WAGLER (1821) in his fragmentary work “Die Amphibien” (installment #1, page 12) provided the original description of a turtle which he named „*Hydrochelys picta* [mihi]. Gemahlte Flufsschildkröte“. None of the critical checklists of turtles includes this name in their synonymies (e.g. the most recent list of FRITZ & HAVAŠ 2007).

Unfortunately, WAGLER’s scanty description ends abruptly after line eight at the end of page 12, which is the last page of installment number one of his publication (Fig. 1). No further installments were ever issued. In his description, WAGLER refers to plate 7 (“Taf. 7”) which was planned to be included in installment # 2 and, thus, was never published. Anyway, the description – not much more than one line each in both Latin and German language – is sufficient to allocate WAGLER’s characterization clearly to the species *Chrysemys picta*, described earlier by SCHNEIDER (1783). WAGLER (l. c.) defines *Hydrochelys picta* as follows: “testa deppressa glaberrima; scutellis disci mediis subquadangularibus flavo marginatis. Rücken-

— 12 —

hachtet, konnte ich nur einen 8 Tage lang erhalten. Wahrscheinlich starben sie an Mangel ihrer natürlichen Nahrung. In den Mägen der von mir zerlegten fand ich in dem einen einen ziemlich großen Tüpfelwurm, in dem andern Larven von Wasserläichern (wahrscheinlich von *Dytiscus*.)

Anmerkung. Ich habe diesen Molch als ein ausgewachsenes Thier deshalb beschrieben und abbilden lassen, weil der Knochen- und innere Bau ganz vollkommen ist. Es ist mir aber ausserdem gar wohl bekannt, und ich habe mich in der Natur selbst davon öfters überzeugt, dass Larven dieser Molche, gleichfalls Anhänger an den kleinen haben, und auch Schneider in seiner hist. amph. nat. fasc. I. Jenae 1799, p. 1 — 78. sagt: die Larve die im Wasser lebt, hat herabhängende Kinnendehnungen. Allein nie fand ich bei allen Larven, die ich zu erhalten Gelegenheit hatte, einen vollkommenen Knochenbau, noch weniger eine vollkommene Ausbildung der inneren Theile, besonders der Leber. Auch die Augen waren nie lebhaft, und immer grau. Der gelehrten Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München übersticke ich ein Pirchen meines Büschelmolches, und das gelohnte Urtheil daraufher wird mich belohnen und erfreuen.

Ich habe noch zu erwähnen, dass in diesem Teiche durchaus keine andere Molchart, trotz allem Nachsuchen, aufzufinden war, und ich daher noch mehr überzeugt seyn muss, es sey dieser Molch kein Junger oder eine Larve, da ich in jenem Falle doch auch Alte hätte finden oder sehen müssen. —

Hydrochelys *) *picta mihi*.
Gemahlte Flufsschildkröte.

Taf. 7.

H. testa deppressa glaberrima; scutellis disci mediis subquadangularibus flavo marginatis,
Rückenschild niedrig, sehr glatt; Mittelschilder der Scheibe fast viereckig, gelb-
gerandet.

*) *Wasser* (Fluss?) *Zsäuz* (Schildkröte).

Fig. 1: Page 12 (last page) of WAGLER’s (1821) publication “Die Amphibien” including all published information available about ‘his’ *Hydrochelys picta*.

schild niedrig, sehr glatt; Mittelschilder der Scheibe fast viereckig; gelbgerandet“.

The nominate subspecies of *Chrysemys picta* is characterized by the transversal seams of the second and third vertebral scutes being in-line with those of the adjacent costals. Therefore, the vertebrals have a more or less quadrangular shape (not hexagonal as in the other subspecies of *C. picta* and most turtles) (comp. ERNST et al. 1994). Furthermore, the seams of the dorsal scutes are wide and broadly edged in yellowish or reddish color. Both features, the quadrangular vertebral scutes and their yellow seams, were mentioned by WAGLER (l. c.). Finally, the rather flat and smooth dorsal shell of *C. picta* correlates well with the general habitus as described by this author. Because of the unambiguous characteristics given in WAGLER's description, *Hydrochelys picta* is classified a junior synonym of *Chrysemys picta picta* (SCHNEIDER, 1783).

In his later works, WAGLER neither mentioned *Hydrochelys picta* nor any of the taxa originally described in his 1821 publication. The reason for this may have been some severe criticism of his descriptions in the year when they were issued (ANONYMUS 1821).

After WAGLER's (1821) publication the name *Hydrochelys picta* was never used in the literature again. Due to its formal availability, the generic name *Hydrochelys* WAGLER, 1821 has priority over *Chrysemys* GRAY, 1844. For reasons of nomenclatural stability and because of the consistent use of *Chrysemys* through more than 160 years (for examples see the synonymies in FRITZ & HAVAŠ 2007), we explicitly state the following in accordance with Article 23.9 of 'The Code' (ICZN 1999): We qualify *Hydrochelys* WAGLER, 1821 as *nomen oblitum* and invalid and the younger, well-established name *Chrysemys* GRAY, 1844 as *nomen protectum* and valid.

The original description of *Chrysemys picta* in SCHNEIDER (1783: 348-349) including the original name *Testudo picta* is based on information SCHNEIDER had received through his friend Professor HERRMANN (Strasbourg). In a remark following the description, SCHNEIDER (l. c.) mentioned that a painting of the specimen his description was based upon had already been prepared

for a comprehensive account planned by the naturalist SCHREBER („...schon längst für den Naturforscher des H. H. SCHREBER abgemalt sey, aber zu der Beschreibung habe er noch keine Zeit gehabt. Ich verweise also auch den Leser auf dieses Werk, worinne künftig eine umständlichere Beschreibung nebst der Abbildung erscheinen wird“). Based on this information (H. H. is interpreted here as "Hochwürdigen Herrn" - "Honorable Sir", a then usual form of address) the authors investigated for publications or illustrations by SCHREBER issued after or even prior to SCHNEIDER's (l. c.) description searching the comprehensive compendium on illustrations in zoological books by NISSEN (1969). The voluminous work on mammals by Johann Christian Daniel VON SCHREBER (1774-1855) was checked including the supplements, but without success. Moreover, VON SCHREBER'S (1773) translation of DUHAMEL DU MONCEAU's comprehensive folio upon fisheries, fish and allied species (1769-1782) as well as the original work of DUHAMEL DU MONCEAU & LA MARRE were studied. Similarly, these books did not contain turtle descriptions. There is no doubt that SCHNEIDER himself (1783) had established the taxon *Chrysemys picta* regardless the remark following his description.

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KEY WORDS: Reptilia, Testudines, Emydidae, *Chrysemys picta picta*, *Hydrochelys picta*, junior synonym; nomenclature, priority, nomen oblitum, nomen protectum, taxonomy

SUBMITTED: August 29, 2007

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First record of the skink *Chalcides armitagei* BOULENGER, 1922 in coastal areas of Guinea Bissau and Senegal

Twenty-four species are currently recognised in the genus *Chalcides* (Squamata: Scincidae), but only six species are known from Sub-Saharan Africa: *Chalcides ocellatus* (FORSKÅL, 1775)¹, *C. ragazzii* PASTEUR, 1981, *C. bottegi* BOULENGER 1898, *C. thierryi* TORNIER, 1901, *C. pulchellus* MOCQUARD, 1906 and *C. armitagei* BOULENGER, 1922 (PASTEUR 1981; CAPUTO et al. 1995, GREENBAUM 2005; GREENBAUM et al. 2006). *Chalcides pulchellus* and *C. thierryi* are distributed in the Sudan and Guinean savannas of West Africa, from Guinea to Mali and from Ghana to Nigeria, respectively. *Chalcides ocellatus* is widely distributed in Northern and Eastern Africa with the occurrence of isolated populations in the Sahelian Niger River flood plain. The range areas of *Chalcides ragazzii* and *C. bottegi* are limited to the horn of Africa.

The Armitage's Skink *Chalcides armitagei* BOULENGER, 1922, is considered as the rarest of the six species of Sub-Saharan Africa (HÄKANSSON 1981; GREENBAUM 2005). Only four specimens, all from The Gambia, have been reported since the description of the species, despite reasonably comprehensive collecting in The Gambia (ANDERSSON 1937; MILES et al.

1978; HÄKANSSON 1981; GRUSCHWITZ et al. 1991; PAUWELS & MEIRTE 1996; BARNETT et al. 2001), Senegal (GRANDISON 1956; CONDAMIN & VILLIERS 1962; CISSE & KARNS 1978; BÖHME 1978; JOGER & LAMBERT 2002) and Guinea Bissau (MANAÇAS 1955). Of the four known specimens, three are preserved in the British Museum (BMNH 1927.2.2.64–66). One of these is from Cape St. Mary (13°29'N, 16°40'W) on the Atlantic coast near the capital city of Banjul, while the two other specimens are simply labelled "Gambia" (HÄKANSSON 1981). The fourth known specimen of *C. armitagei* (stored at Makasutu Wildlife Trust, Serrekunda, Gambia; collection number: MWTR 003) is also from the coast of The Gambia, north of Kartung village (13°06'N, 16°45'W) (GREENBAUM 2005).

Here we report the occurrence of *Chalcides armitagei* at the village of Boukot Ouolof (12°25'N, 16°45'W), on the coast of Casamance in Senegal, where we obtained thirteen specimens from villagers, and at the mouth of the river Essoukoudiai bolon (12°21'N, 16°40'W), 3 km W of Sucujaque in Guinea Bissau, where we collected two specimens of this species on July 12, 2006. The specimens are preserved at the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), Dakar. The main measurements and meristic data of Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean specimens are indicated in Table 1. They present the following characters that distinguish *C. armitagei* from all other Sub-Saharan species of *Chalcides* (GREENBAUM et al. 2006): limbs tridactyl, postnasal usually absent (except for one specimen on both sides of the head and for another specimen on one side only), three supraciliaries, five supralabials (six on one side of the head for one specimen), four infralabials, 91–97 scales from mental to anus. Among species of *Chalcides* from other parts of the world, five species are tridactyl, all belonging to the *C. chalcides* group and distributed in Mediterranean countries (PASTEUR 1981; CAPUTO 1993; CAPUTO et al. 1995): *C. chalcides* (LINNAEUS, 1758), *C. mertensi* KLAUSEWITZ, 1954, *C. pseudostriatus* CAPUTO, 1993, *C. minutus* CAPUTO, 1993 and *C. striatus* (CUVIER, 1829). They differ from *C. armitagei* by a series of characters, including the presence

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Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Herpetozoa](#)

Jahr/Year: 2008

Band/Volume: [20_3_4](#)

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Artikel/Article: [Hydrochelys picta Wagler, 1821: a junior sysnonym of Chrysemys picta picta \(Schneider, 1783\) 187-189](#)