

**DESCRIPTION OF INVASIVE EXOTIC REPTILE SPECIES
FROM THE LESSER ANTILLES**



Trachemys stejnegeri

(Schmidt, 1928)

Common name: Antillean slider, Central Antillean slider, Puerto Rican slider

Local name: Trachémyde de Stejneger, Trachémyde de Porto Rico, Tortue peinte

Order: Testudines, Family: Emydidae

Description

Morphology. Medium-sized freshwater turtle, *Trachemys stejnegeri* is characterised by a dark red or brownish supra-temporal stripe accompanied by several discrete stripes between the orbit and the supra-temporal (Barbour and Carr, 1940). Head and limbs are brown or olive-brown in colour (Seidel, 1988; Barbour and Carr, 1940). The plastron is yellow to orange in all individuals, except the oldest ones, and present a symmetrical and wavy shape (Seidel, 1988). The carapace is relatively smooth, weakly streamlined, and serrated on the posterior part. Its colour varies from light brown to chestnut. In adults, the carapace is usually unmarked except for clear bands or discoloured ocelli on the margins. In juveniles, the pleura present a dark spot surrounded by a yellow or orange ring (Seidel, 1988; Barbour and Carr, 1940).

Standard body size (length of the carapace). males: 105 to 210 mm; females: 110 to 280 mm (Seidel, 1988; Jones and Willey, 2011)

Sexual dimorphism. Male *Trachemys* have elongated tails and a cloaca extending from the posterior part of the carapace, while females have a shorter tail and a cloaca that does not extend beyond the posterior part of the carapace (Seidel and Ernst 2012).

Females are generally larger than males (Jones and Willey, 2011).

Possible confusion with other species. Confusion is possible with several species of the genus *Trachemys*, such as *T. decorata*. *T. stejnegeri* and *T. decorata* are relatively close geographically and occur in sympatry in Haiti and

the Dominican Republic (Seidel and Inchaustegui, 1984). These two species are distinguished by the colour of the supra-temporal stripes: deep or dark red in *T. stejnegeri*, yellow or pale green in *T. decorata* (Barbour and Carr, 1940; Seidel, 1988; Fritz, 1991).

Distribution

Native. Puerto Rico (Culebra and Vieques), Great Inagua (Bahamas), Haiti, Dominican Republic, Turks and Caicos (Seidel et Inchaustegui, 1984; Jones et Willey, 2011; Powell et al., 2011; Rhodin et al., 2017)

Introduced. Caribbean: Guadeloupe (Breuil, 2002; Breuil et al., 2009; Powell et al., 2011), Dominica, (Seidel and Adkins, 1987; Seidel, 1988)

Biology and ecology

Habitat. *Trachemys stejnegeri* can cope with a great diversity of natural and anthropized habitats (Seidel and Inchaustegui, 1984; Jones et Willey, 2011). Usually observed in shallow, soft-bottomed water bodies, swamps and rivers (Seidel et Inchaustegui, 1984; Jones et Willey, 2011).

Diet. Omnivore (in captivity).

Reproduction. The nesting season happen from April to July. Three to fourteen eggs are laid per nest.

Impact and management of introduced populations

Impact. Little is known about the impact of *Trachemys stejnegeri* on native ecosystems in introduced regions.

Management. No targeted control measures have been established in the different regions where the species has been introduced.

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