



The Katharine Ordway
Natural History Study Area

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ORDWAY BULLETIN
No. 62

MACALESTER
COLLEGE

located at 9550 Inver Grove Trail (Dakota County Road 77), Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

REPTILIAN INFANT at ORDWAY

While walking the ridge path I observed three turtle nests, their earth covers having been pushed open from within by hatchlings, whose withered egg cases were strewn in the vicinity of each opening. I had not walked this way for some time and so I believe the nests were opened during the early part of September for it was not the 21st day of that month. All three of the cavities were located on slopes facing southeastward.

Returning toward The Station along the same trail I came upon a small Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) which was moving along the trail in the direction from which I was walking. Its color blended perfectly with the moist, decaying leaves in the path and in the overcast light it was quite fortuitous that I did not step on him. I was on the lookout for the myriads of fungus growths which were popping up all along the trail and this was a little more careful than usual about where I stepped; in fact, the little fellow did resemble a dark gray-black growth in the path and as I bent to observe more closely he moved and changed my perspective.

Perhaps he came from still another nest further away from the water (they have been known to go rather long distances from water for laying their eggs); regardless, he was headed toward the waters of River Lake when we accosted each other.

He was not very large, about 5 cm. (2") in diameter and his carapace had the typical small notches at the rear near his tail. Both his head and tail remained visible as he is less capable of withdrawing these members, both by nature of his anatomy and also his temperament. I turned him onto his back to observe the characteristically small plastron which is the reason he cannot retract his external members as is customarily a turtle's defense when being handled or attacked.

He easily turned himself over and when I left him he was scampering along the trail in the direction of the Lake, about 400 meters distant. It was mid-afternoon and he had a good chance of reaching water by nightfall.

R J CHRISTMAN
Naturalist
Katharine Ordway Natural
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30 January 1978