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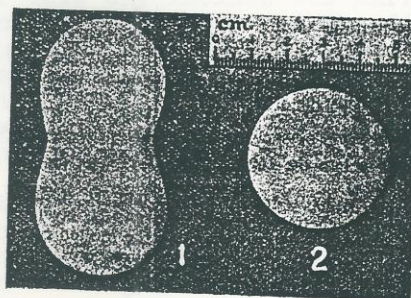
J. mar. biol. Ass. India, 21 (2), 1959:26

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ON AN ABNORMAL EGG OF THE TURTLE, *LEPIDOCHELYS OLIVACEA OLIVACEA* (ESCHSCHOLTZ) WITH OBSERVATIONS ON HATCHING OF THE EGGS

An abnormal egg, more or less dumb-bell shaped (Fig. 1) was noticed in a batch of about 120 turtle eggs collected from the beach at Vedalai near Mandapam (Gulf of Mannar) on 28-10-1959. On subsequent hatching it was found that they were of *Lepidochelys olivacea olivacea* (Esch.). The two eggs in union were unequal, measuring 36 mm. and 33 mm. in diameter and 26 mm. at the place of union; the long axis being 72 mm. The normal eggs are spherical (Fig. 2), 40-41 mm. in diameter.



The eggs were buried on 29-10-1959 at a depth of about 40 cm., in two lots, one lot, consisting of 35, in a slightly shady garden near the museum of the Research Station, about 220 metres away from the sea and the second on the beach (Gulf of Mannar) at a distance of 6 metres from the high tide mark. On 5-1-1960, two actively crawling young ones and a dead one, apparently trod to death, were found in the vicinity of the museum. A single young one was reported to have been observed near the museum even on 3-1-1960. Five dead embryos of which, two were fully developed but had failed to hatch out and three in an advanced stage of development were dug up on the 5th, from the first lot buried near the museum. Those buried on the beach when dug up on 5-1-1960 showed no signs of development, the yolk itself having hardened.

Deraniyagala (*Tetrapod Reptiles of Ceylon*, Vol. 1, 1939). has drawn attention to the exceedingly variable nature of the number and arrangement of the vertebral and coastal scutes in this species. The number of scutes present in the three young ones with carapace length of 37.5, 38.0 and 39.0 mm. respectively were as follows: Vertebrales (excluding the nuchal and pygal) were 5; 7; 7 and the costals were 6/7; 7/8; 7/7 respectively.

The three young ones had thirteen marginal scutes on each side.

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