

# A new species of long-necked turtle (Pleurodira: Chelidae: *Chelodina*) from the late Miocene Alcoota Local Fauna, Northern Territory, Australia

The new species *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* is described from the late Miocene Alcoota Local Fauna of central Australia, in the Northern Territory. The new species is based on shell fragments and can be diagnosed by a ventrally reflexed anterior margin of the plastron, a ventrally narrowed cervical scute and strongly dorsally curved margins of the carapace extending from approximately peripheral two to peripheral nine or ten as well as by a unique combination of characters. Within *Chelodina* the new species is part of the nominal subgenus and within that subgenus it is most closely related to the *Chelodina (Chelodina) novaeguineae* species group. This is not only the oldest record but also the most southerly occurrence of this species group.

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## 8 Introduction

9 *Chelodina* is an extant genus of chelid turtle found in Australia, New Guinea, East Timor and  
10 Roti Island, Indonesia (Georges & Thomson, 2010). Popularly known as long-necked or snake-  
11 necked turtles they are readily distinguished from other Australasian chelids by their elongated  
12 necks, four-clawed forelimbs and contacting gular scutes on the plastron (Cogger, 1975; Georges  
13 & Thomson, 2010). The genus is also distinguished by a distinctive skull morphology including  
14 the loss of the temporal bar, fusion of the frontals, nasals separated by an anterior process of the  
15 frontals and an extensive quadrate-basisphenoid contact (Gaffney, 1977). Gaffney (1977)  
16 proposed that the genus shares closer relationships with long-necked South American chelids  
17 (such as *Hydromedusa* and *Chelus*) than with short-necked Australasian chelids on the basis of  
18 shared derived morphological features. However phylogenetic analyses of nuclear and  
19 mitochondrial genes indicate that reciprocal monophyly of South American and Australasian  
20 chelids is a much more likely scenario (Seddon et al., 1997; Georges et al., 1998). In keeping with  
21 its probable monophyly, Georges et al. (1998) unwittingly resurrected the old name Chelodininae  
22 Baur, 1893 for the Australasian clade when they proposed the same name as new. Within  
23 Chelodininae, *Chelodina* is invariably the sister taxon of all other Australasian chelids in all  
24 analyses where Chelodininae is recovered, or the taxon sampling is restricted to chelodines  
25 (Georges & Adams, 1992; Seddon et al., 1997; Georges et al., 1998; Thomson & Georges, 2009).

26 Within *Chelodina* three separate species groups can be recognised on the basis of morphology  
27 and electrophoretic analysis of allozymes (Burbidge, Kirsch & Main, 1974; Georges, Adams &  
28 McCord, 2002). These groups have been assigned separate generic names (Wells & Wellington,  
29 1985; McCord & Ouni, 2007) but a recent synthetic work on Australian turtle taxonomy has  
30 treated them as subgenera (Georges & Thomson, 2010) and this practice is followed here. *C.*  
31 (*Chelodina*) includes smaller species with broad plastron and a slender head and neck with a  
32 length that does not exceed that of the carapace (Georges & Thomson, 2010). *C.*  
33 (*Macrochelodina*) includes larger species with a long broad head and neck that exceeds the length  
34 of the carapace and a narrow plastron. *C.* (*Macrodiremys*) includes a single species, *C.*  
35 (*Macrodiremys colliei*), which is outwardly similar to *C.* (*Macrochelodina*) but has some unusual  
36 characters such as a continuous row of exposed neural bones in the carapace and a lack of  
37 posterior expansion of the carapace (Burbidge, Kirsch & Main, 1974; Georges & Thomson,  
38 2010). Furthermore molecular phylogenetics has consistently found *C.* (*Macrodiremys colliei*) to  
39 be more closely related to *C.* (*Chelodina*) than to *C.* (*Macrochelodina*), supporting its separation  
40 from the latter (Seddon et al. 1997, Georges et al. 1998; Georges, Adams & McCord, 2002).

## 41 The fossil record of *Chelodina*

42 *Chelodina* has a long fossil record, as one might expect from such a deep branch within  
43 Chelodiniinae. However it is much sparser than the fossil record of the short-necked chelodinine  
44 clade.

45 The earliest specimens referred to *Chelodina* have been found in the Eocene deposits of Redbank  
46 Plains in south eastern Queensland. Here there are three forms known from incomplete shells,  
47 one of which has been named *C. alanruxi* (Lapparent de Broin & Molnar, 2001). None of these  
48 forms can be easily assigned to the extant subgenera, not least because the material is limited and  
49 incomplete. In the case of *C. alanruxi* there are some similarities with *C. (Macrochelodina)* but  
50 there are also some notable plesiomorphies such as a complete row of exposed neural bones in  
51 the carapace and a posterior vertebral scute that is as wide as the suprapygal scute (Lapparent de  
52 Broin & Molnar, 2001). These indicate that *C. alanruxi* could well belong to the *Chelodina* stem-  
53 group, rather than to any of the recognised subgenera but this will need to be tested with more  
54 complete fossils and a phylogenetic analysis of *Chelodina* ingroup relationships that includes  
55 fossils.

56 There is a considerable gap between the Eocene and the next oldest occurrences of *Chelodina* in  
57 the early to middle Miocene carbonate deposits of Riversleigh in Queensland and Bullock Creek  
58 in the Northern Territory. *Chelodina* has been recorded from two sites at Riversleigh, Gag Site  
59 and Quentin's Quarry, both of which have been assigned to system C (Archer et al., 1989).  
60 However, constrained seriation analysis indicates that Quentin's Quarry is referable to the early  
61 Miocene Wipajirian Australian Land Mammal Age, whereas Gag Site belongs to the younger  
62 middle Miocene Camfieldian ALMA (Megirian et al., 2010). The Quentin's Quarry specimen is  
63 an intriguing skull fragment that exhibits several distinct autapomorphies and cannot be easily  
64 placed in any of the extant subgenera (White, 1997). The specimen from Gag site is a  
65 fragmentary shell that would appear to have affinities *C. (Macrochelodina)* based on the absence  
66 of exposed neural bones and the length of its intergular scute which is only slightly longer than  
67 the midline contact of the pectoral scutes (Gaffney, Archer & White, 1989).

68 The Camfield beds of Bullock Creek are Camfieldian in age and have produced two distinct  
69 *Chelodina* species. Both species are only known with certainty from isolated epiplastra (Megirian  
70 & Murray, 1999). One of these, *Chelodina* sp. B, may belong to *C. (Chelodina)* based on the  
71 squared-off profile of the anterior lobe of the plastron.

72 The record becomes a little better in the Plio-Pleistocene. From Tara Creek in Queensland there is  
73 a *Chelodina* specimen that is likely to be similar in age to the nearby Bluff Downs local fauna  
74 (Gaffney, 1981). The Bluff Downs local fauna is Early Pliocene in age and belongs to the  
75 Tirarian ALMA (Megirian et al., 2010). The specimen is unusual in that it lacks a finely  
76 ornamented surface even though the seams between scutes are well-marked (Gaffney, 1981).  
77 Based on the narrow anterior lobe of the plastron, a long inter-pectoral seam which exceeds the  
78 length of the intergular scute (Gaffney, 1981, fig. 8), this specimen would appear to be a member  
79 of *Chelodina (Macrochelodina)*.

80 From the Pliocene Bluff downs local fauna itself there is a single nuchal bone that has been  
81 identified as *Chelodina* based largely on the presence of a broad, square-shaped cervical scute  
82 (Thomson & Mackness, 1999). The specimen was tentatively assigned to the nominate subgenus  
83 (as the '*Chelodina longicollis* group') on the basis of its well developed ornamentation. However,  
84 as the authors themselves note, this is a variable character, for example *Chelodina*  
85 (*Macrochelodina*) *insculpta* also has well-developed surficial ornamentation (Thomson, 2000,  
86 fig. 4).

87 *Chelodina* (*Macrochelodina*) *insculpta* is a named fossil species based on fragments from the  
88 Plio-Pleistocene of the Darling Downs that bear a close resemblance to *C. (M.) expansa* but differ  
89 from it in a having a less flared margin of the carapace (Thomson, 2000).

90 Lapparent de Broin & Molnar (2001) point out that a posterior plastral fragment figured by  
91 Gaffney (1981, fig. 18a) belongs to *Chelodina* based on the rounded shape of the posterolateral  
92 margin of the ischiadic scar on the dorsal surface of the xiphiplastron and the rounded nature of  
93 the fine tubercles that decorate its ventral surface. This fragment comes from the late Pleistocene,  
94 or Naracourtean, Katapiri Formation of Lake Kanunka, in the Tirari Desert of central South  
95 Australia. A second probable Pleistocene from central South Australia is represented by an  
96 isolated cervical vertebra from Cooper Creek (Gaffney, 1981). Unfortunately neither specimen  
97 displays diagnostic characters that would allow determination of their subgeneric affinities.  
98 Nonetheless these specimens are interesting because they show that *Chelodina* was surviving in  
99 central Australia until quite recently, well outside its present range.

100 Lastly there is a Naracourtean (late Pleistocene) record of *Chelodina* from Henshkes Cave, in  
101 south eastern South Australia based on isolated plastron elements (Gaffney, 1981). These are  
102 similar to the extant *C. (Macrochelodina) expansa* (Gaffney, 1981).

103 While it is highly likely that remains of the widespread, common species *C. (Chelodina)*  
104 *longicollis* are present in some of many Naracourtean vertebrate faunas of south eastern  
105 Australia, none have been positively recorded.

106 Thus *C. (Chelodina)* has an exceptionally poor fossil record, if any at all, with just a couple of  
107 fragmentary possible occurrences reported in the literature. Here I describe a new species of this  
108 subgenus from the late Miocene vertebrate fossil locality of Alcoota Station, Northern Territory.  
109 This is the first definite occurrence of the subgenus in the fossil record and the first diagnosable  
110 extinct species in the subgenus.

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## 121 **Geological Setting**

122 The Waite Formation is a late Neogene filling of the Waite Basin, a small intracratonic basin  
123 located in the Northern Territory to the northeast of Alice Springs (Woodburne, 1967). It is a  
124 coarsening-upward sequence of fluvial silts and sands with minor limestone beds (Woodburne,  
125 1967). Two vertebrate fossil-bearing horizons are known, one giving rise to the older Alcoota  
126 local fauna and the other the younger Ongeva local fauna (Woodburne, 1967; Megirian, Murray  
127 & Wells, 1996). The Alcoota Local Fauna is found in an extensive, dense, jumbled bone bed. The  
128 bone bed is thought to have formed from a debris flow that incorporated the skeletons of many  
129 hundreds of animals that had died in a drought-related mass mortality event around a major  
130 waterhole in an ancient river system (Murray & Vickers-Rich, 2004). Almost all of the bones in  
131 the deposit are disarticulated and randomly scattered. The bulk of the fossils belong to terrestrial  
132 species, dominated by the small macropodine wallaby, *Dorcopsoides*, several diprotodontid  
133 marsupials and large dromornithid birds (Murray & Megirian, 1992). Turtles are rare in this  
134 deposit and are only known from isolated bones of the shell. These fragments have received little  
135 attention in the scientific literature. They were first mentioned by Newsome & Rochow (1964)  
136 and then again by Gaffney (1981). Neither were able to identify the limited material as anything  
137 more precise than 'Testudines indeterminate'. An intensive collecting program led by the  
138 Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory over the past three decades has produced  
139 many more pieces of turtle shell, including diagnostic elements that allow a new species to be  
140 recognised.

## 141 **Systematic palaeontology**

142 TESTUDINES Linnaeus, 1758

143 PLEURODIRA Cope, 1864

144 CHELIDAE Gray, 1831

145 CHELODININAE Baur, 1893

146 *Chelodina* Fitzinger, 1826

147 *Chelodina (Chelodina)* (Fitzinger, 1826)

148 *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov.

149 urn:lsid:zoobank.org:act:9DDFE14D-8E52-4F7D-B148-F552100865C9

150 *Holotype*. Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory (hereafter, NTM) P5364, right  
151 epiplastron (Figure 1).

152 *Referred Specimens.* NTM P5337, peripheral, probably left peripheral 2; NTM P5369, left  
153 hyoplastron; NTM P5370, nuchal; NTM 5371, left peripheral 8; NTM 5373, peripheral, probably  
154 left peripheral 10; NTM P5374, right xiphoplastron; NTM P5375, left hypoplastron; NTM P5376,  
155 mid-series costal; NTM P5377, proximal end of right costal 7; NTM P5378, indeterminate  
156 peripheral; NTM P5409, distal end of right costal 2; NTM P9810, left hypoplastron; NTM  
157 P9892, right hypoplastron; plus many other poorly informative shell fragments that are  
158 unregistered in the NTM palaeontology collection.

159 *Locality and Horizon.* All specimens come from the lower bone bed of the Waite Formation on  
160 Alcoota Scientific Reserve, 200 km northeast of Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia. The  
161 lower bone bed (Alcoota Local Fauna) is Late Miocene in age or Waitean in terms of Australian  
162 Land Mammal Ages (Megirian et al., 2010).

163 *Etymology.* In recognition of Peter Murray, who has led two decades of excavation at Alcoota and  
164 has published many significant contributions to our knowledge of the site.

165 *Diagnosis.* A species of *C. (Chelodina)* with the following autapomorphies: a sharp, ventrally-  
166 curved lip along the anterior margin of the gular scute of the plastron. Ventral side of the cervical  
167 scute of the carapace is 55% of the width of the dorsal side. Dorsally-curved lateral margins of  
168 the peripheral extending away from the bridge area both anteriorly and posteriorly, perhaps as far  
169 as peripheral 2 anteriorly and peripheral 10 posteriorly.

170 *Differential Diagnosis.* Apart from the diagnostic autapomorphies mentioned above *C. (C.)*  
171 *murrayi* has a unique combination of characters that allow it to be distinguished from all other  
172 Australasian chelids. It can be distinguished from all short-necked Australasian chelids by the  
173 presence of a midline contact between the gular scutes, anterior to the intergular scute on the  
174 plastron. It can be distinguished from *Chelodina (Macrodiremys) colliei* by the lateral expansion  
175 of the anterior lobe of the plastron, the location of the triple junction between the intergular,  
176 humeral and pectoral scutes on the epiplastron and a robust, medially extended anterior bridge  
177 strut of the hyoplastron. It can be distinguished from species of *Chelodina (Macrochelodina)* by  
178 the lateral expansion of the anterior lobe of the plastron, a broad, tear-drop shaped sutural surface  
179 on the anterior bridge strut, absence of a well-defined line on the anterior bridge strut  
180 demarcating the attachment of the dermis and the short junction of the pectoral scute pair that  
181 was exceeded in length by the intergular scute. Within *Chelodina (Chelodina)* it can be  
182 distinguished from *C. (C.) longicollis* and *C. (C.) steindachneri* by a large anterior bridge strut  
183 that almost certainly extended onto the pleural bones. The strongly dorsally curved margins of the  
184 peripheral bones distinguish it from *C. (C.) steindachneri*, *C. (C.) pritchardi* and *C. (C.) reimanni*  
185 which have no marginal curving. The well-developed and extensive nature of this curving also  
186 serves to distinguish the new species from *C. (C.) novaeguineae* and *C. (C.) canni* which only  
187 develop weak marginal curving in the bridge region. It can be distinguished from *C. (C.)*  
188 *pritchardi*, *(C.) novaeguineae*, *C. (C.) mccordi*, and *C. (C.) reimanni* by the widening of the  
189 anterior plastral lobe anterior to the axial notch. The lack of a distinct lateral bulge of the femoral  
190 scute on the xiphoplastron distinguishes it from *C. (C.) longicollis*, *C. (C.) novaeguineae* and *C.*

191 (*C. reimanni*). Finally the failure of the intergular scute to extend broadly onto the hyoplastra  
192 distinguishes this species from *C. (C.) canni*.

## 193 **Description**

### 194 **Carapace**

195 *Nuchal bone*. The nuchal bone (NTM P5370) is the most informative part of the carapace that has  
196 been recovered from Alcoota (Fig. 2, Table 1). It is a roughly trapezoidal, bilaterally symmetrical  
197 plate that is only marginally longer than it is wide at its posterior end. The lateral edges that  
198 contacted the first peripherals on each side are gently concave whereas the posterior margin that  
199 would have sutured with the first pair of costals is convex. The seams that mark the boundaries of  
200 the scutes on the dorsal surface of the nuchal indicate that the anterior end was covered by a  
201 central cervical scute which was flanked on each side by the first pair of marginal scutes. The  
202 cervical scute is broadly rectangular and is 1.27 times longer than it is wide. Posteriorly the  
203 dorsal surface of the nuchal bone was covered entirely by a large first vertebral scute. The dorsal  
204 profile of the nuchal bone is gently concave. Ventrally the fine reticulate ornament and scute  
205 seams extend posteriorly for 20 mm before reaching the crescent-shaped scar that marks the  
206 attachment of the skin to the ventral surface of the carapace. The portion of the cervical scute that  
207 continues onto the ventral surface of the carapace is strongly narrowed relative to the dorsal  
208 portion. Its width is 51 per cent of the dorsal portion of the scute. The anterior rim of the nuchal  
209 is not curved dorsally, unlike the margins of all the known peripherals.

210 *Costal bones*. There are several costal bone fragments, of which NTM P5377, the proximal end  
211 of a right costal 7, is the most informative (Figure 3A-D). The costal bone extends all the way to  
212 the midline indicating that there was no exposed neural bone on the midline. Other fragments  
213 from the medial ends of costals also lack an exposed neural bone, indicating that there were at  
214 most one or two discontinuous exposed neurals, if any at all. Dorsally the bone is traversed by a  
215 single longitudinal seam that in life divided the fourth pleural scute from the fourth or fifth  
216 vertebral scute. The dorsal surfaces of all of the costal bones are rugose with rounded irregular  
217 ridges that tend to become elongated and transversely aligned toward the distal end (fig. 3E).  
218 These replace the rounded flat tubercles separated by a network of finely etched grooves that are  
219 seen on the ventral surface of the plastron and the dorsal surface of some of the peripherals. A  
220 fossa with a sharp anterior rim excavates the ventral surface along the posterior margin, near the  
221 medial end. This represents the anterior part of the iliac scar. The medial ends of this specimen  
222 and other costal bones do not curve ventrally indicating that a longitudinal median furrow was  
223 not present.

224 *Peripheral bones*. All of the preserved peripheral bones (NTM P5337, P5371, 5373 and P5378)  
225 have dorsally curved margins. The anterior most preserved peripheral (NTM P5337) is almost  
226 certainly peripheral 2 (Fig. 4A-F), while the posterior most one (NTM P5373) is probably a  
227 peripheral 10 based on the sinuous posterior sutural line that would have contacted the pygal

228 (Fig. 4G-L). These indicated that the upcurved margins of the shell extended well anterior and  
229 posterior of the bridge. The margin of peripheral 2 is particularly strongly curved, similar to the  
230 degree displayed by peripherals from the bridge region of *C. (C.) longicollis* even though this  
231 specimen is clearly not from the bridge (fig. 4B). The dorsal surface of the peripherals is  
232 ornamented with fine irregular rugae (e.g. NTM P5337, Fig. 4A) or a fine reticulate ornament of  
233 the same type seen on the surface of the bones of the plastron (e.g. NTM P5373, Fig. 4G).

## 234 **Plastron**

235 Like the carapace the plastron is only known from isolated elements. However, unlike the  
236 carapace, enough pieces are known from similar sized individuals to produce a reconstruction  
237 (Fig. 5).

238 *Epiplastron*. The epiplastron is represented by the holotype, NTM P5364 (Fig. 1, Table 1). It is a  
239 roughly elliptical plate with a rounded convex anterolateral margin. The margin forms a thin  
240 sharp edge that is weakly reflexed ventrally at its posterior end where it forms the anterolateral  
241 margin of the humeral scute. The ventral curvature of the margin becomes more strongly  
242 developed anteriorly, along the anterolateral margin of the gular scute. Anteriorly the ventral  
243 surface is crossed by the seam between the gular and intergular scutes. This seam reaches the  
244 median symphyseal line posterior to the anterior margin indicating that the intergular scute was  
245 retracted from the anterior margin and the two gular scutes had an anterior midline contact.  
246 However this midline contact appears to have been rather short, with a pointed anterior process of  
247 the intergular scute intruding deeply between the pair. The posterior end of the epiplastron is  
248 damaged but a seam line can be seen clearly curving from the lateral margin of the intergular  
249 scute toward the lateral margin of the epiplastron. This seam forms the posterior border of the  
250 humeral scute and indicates that the pectoral scute extended onto the posterior surface of the  
251 epiplastron. The humeral-pectoral scute seam meets the humeral-intergular scute seam at the  
252 medial margin of NTM P5364, but this is clearly a broken edge, not the sutural surface that  
253 contacts the entoplastron. Therefore the triple junction of the humeral, pectoral and intergular  
254 scute occurs on the epiplastron.

255 *Hyoplastron*. The complete hyoplastron (NTM P5369) is the largest single piece of turtle shell  
256 recovered from Alcoota (Fig. 6, Table 1). It represents a moderately small turtle with a plastron  
257 width at the level of the axial notches of about 105 mm. The anterior lobe expands slightly  
258 laterally, anterior to the axial notch as in adult *C. (C.) canni* (McCord & Thomson, 2002), though  
259 not to the extreme displayed by *C. (C.) longicollis* (e.g. NTM R27168). In lateral view the  
260 anterior lobe is slightly upcurved. Its margin is a simple edge that is not ventrally reflexed as in  
261 the margin of the epiplastron. A strongly developed seam representing the junction of the  
262 abdominal and pectoral scutes extends transversely across the ventral surface, approximately one  
263 quarter of the length of the bone from its posterior margin. The seam curves posteriorly as it  
264 approaches the medial symphyseal suture. There is no seam present near the anteromedial corner  
265 of the bone where the medial symphysis meets the suture between the hyoplastron and the  
266 entoplastron. This indicates that the posterior end of the intergular scute terminated on the  
267 entoplastron and did not extend onto the hyoplastra as it does in *C. (C.) canni* (pers. obs., NTM

268 R16325). Anteriorly the hyoplastron forms a short jagged sutural surface that contacted the  
269 epiplastron. Lateral to the triangular notch in this suture, the ventral surface is marked by a seam  
270 that extends from the hyoplastron-epiplastron suture to the lateral margin of the hyoplastron. This  
271 indicates that the posterolateral corner of the humeral scute extended onto the hyoplastron.  
272 Because the humeral-pectoral scute seam intersects the hyoplastron-epiplastron suture rather than  
273 extending transversely to the hyoplastron-entoplastron suture, the pectoral scute must have  
274 extended onto the epiplastron, as is shown by the epiplastron from Alcoota (NTM P5364). The  
275 axial notch extends for slightly less than half the length of the hyoplastron. The bridge region,  
276 posterior and lateral to the axial notch is set at a very broad angle to the ventral plate of the  
277 hypoplastron. Although some crushing may have further flattened the hypoplastron it seems likely  
278 that the shell was quite dorsoventrally shallow in life. The anterior end of the bridge region  
279 curves sharply dorsally and medially to form the anterior bridge strut. No distinct line can be seen  
280 on this surface marking the attachment of the dermis. A rounded notch that is 1.7 mm across  
281 excavates the anterodorsal margin of the bridge at the point that it curves medially to form the  
282 anterior bridge strut (Fig. 7C). This notch would have formed a complete foramen when  
283 articulated with the third peripheral. Extant *Chelodina* have a well developed foramen in the  
284 same position to allow for the passage of the axillary duct of Rathke's gland (Goode, 1967;  
285 Weldon & Gaffney 1998). The sutural surface of the anterior bridge strut that contacted the  
286 carapace is tear-drop shaped with a strongly expanded medial end. The medial projection of the  
287 anterior bridge strut is great enough to be confident that it would have made broad contact with  
288 the ventral surface with the first costal bone when articulated with the carapace.

289 *Hypoplastron*. The hypoplastron is represented by three specimens, all of which are damaged.  
290 The main body is a roughly square plate with a laterally protruding bridge process (Figs. 8, 9).  
291 The ventral surface of the main body is traversed by a straight transverse seam, dividing the  
292 abdominal scute from the femoral scute. The lateral end of the seam terminates at the rounded  
293 inguinal notch between the body and the bridge process. Posterior to the inguinal notch the lateral  
294 margin of the femoral scute is produced laterally to form a modest semilunate flange. As in the  
295 hypoplastron the bridge is set at a very broad angle to the main body, indicating a markedly  
296 shallow shell not unlike *C. (C.) steindachneri*.

297 *Xiphiplastron*. The single complete xiphiplastron (NTM P5374) is a flat trapezoidal plate (Fig.  
298 10, Table 1). The ventral surface was largely covered by the anal scute with a narrow band of the  
299 femoral scute covering the anterior end of the bone. The lateral margin is damaged in the middle  
300 but the posterior and anterior ends of the lateral margin are complete. These show that the lateral  
301 margin in the region of the femoral scute was in line with the posterior lateral margin of the anal  
302 scute and did not project laterally to form a femoral bulge like some chelodines such as  
303 *Chelodina (Chelodina) longicollis* and *Birlimarr gaffneyi* (Megirian & Murray, 1999). The  
304 posterolateral corner is moderately thickened and upturned. It is not extended posteriorly and the  
305 lateral and posterior margins meet to form a right-angled corner. Mirror-imaging (Fig. 10E)  
306 indicates that the anal notch was triangular. The dorsal surface bears sutural scars for the ischium  
307 and pubis. The pubic scar is centrally located in the anterior half of the xiphiplastron and is  
308 roughly oval and oriented with its long axis extending obliquely anteromedial to posterolateral.

309 The ischiadic scar is elongate and tongue-shaped and extends to the midline suture, where it  
310 would have met its partner and formed a continuous crescentic scar. The anterior and posterior  
311 margins of the scar are parallel and do not diverge laterally. The posterolateral margin is rounded.

## 312 Discussion

### 313 Phylogenetic relationships

314 The midline contact of the gular scutes anterior to the intergular is a well-known synapomorphy  
315 of *Chelodina* (Gaffney, 1977, 1981; Georges & Thomson, 2010). The rounded posterolateral  
316 margin of the ischiadic scar on the xiphiplastron is a further synapomorphy of *Chelodina*  
317 (Lapparent de Broin & Molnar, 2001). Finally the enlargement of the axillary scent gland  
318 foramen would appear to be also a synapomorphy of *Chelodina*. The foramen is large in  
319 *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*) (e.g. diameter of 2.2 mm in *C. (C.) longicollis*; NTM R27168) and  
320 *Chelodina* (*Macrochelodina*) (e.g. *C. (M.) expansa*; Goode, 1967, fig. 134) whereas it is  
321 comparatively tiny in members of the short-necked clade (e.g. diameter of 0.9 mm in *Emydura*  
322 sp.; NTM unregistered) (Fig. 7A).

323 Lateral widening of the anterior lobe of the plastron is a character that has only been observed  
324 among members of the nominal subgenus (e.g. *C. (C.) longicollis* and *C. (C.) canni*) and is  
325 probably a synapomorphy of the subgenus that reverses in some members of the *C. (C.)*  
326 *novaeguineae* species complex. Further supporting a position within *C. (Chelodina)*, the length of  
327 the intergular scute was almost certainly greater than twice the length of the seam between the  
328 pectoral scutes. In short-necked chelodines the ratio of the length of the intergular scute to the  
329 length of the shared pectoral seam ranges from 0.55 (*Emydura* sp.) to 1.35 (*Pseudemydura*  
330 *umbrina*) a range that overlaps with the range of 1.14 to 1.53 seen in *Chelodina*  
331 (*Macrochelodina*) (Table 2). *C. (Macrodiremys) colliei* also falls in this range with a ratio of 1.43.  
332 Thus a ratio of less than 2 is clearly primitive for Chelodinae. In contrast all members of *C.*  
333 (*Chelodina*) have an intergular scute that is more than twice the length of the shared pectoral  
334 seam and can range up to 5.35 times longer in *C. (C.) canni* (Table 2).

335 The state of this character can be determined in *C. (Chelodina) murrayi* despite the fragmentary  
336 nature of the material. The length of the junction between the pectoral scutes on the hyoplastron  
337 (P5369) is 28 mm. Because the intergular scute extends close to the posterior end of the  
338 entoplastron in all *Chelodina*, the total length of the pectoral scute junction in life could not have  
339 been more than a few millimetres longer than the length of the seam present on the hyoplastron.  
340 The depth of the notch in the anterior margin of the hyoplastron for receiving the entoplastron is  
341 27 mm. Thus the midline length of the intergular scute was approximately 27 mm plus an  
342 unknown length that protruded anteriorly between the epiplastra. There is 18 mm of intergular  
343 scute overlapping the midline suture of the epiplastron. Because the width of this epiplastron  
344 from the midline to the lateral edge is a good match for the width of the anterior end of the  
345 hyoplastron (Fig. 6A) they must derive from similar sized individuals or possibly even the same

346 individual. Thus we can be confident that the length of the intergular in an individual the size of  
347 P5369 or P 5364 was 45mm (18 + 27) plus an unknown length between the anterior end of the  
348 hyoplastron and the posterior end of the midline suture between the epiplastra. Thus, even when  
349 the unknown segment of the intergular is ignored, the ratio of intergular to the shared pectoral  
350 seam exceeds the ratio of 1.5 which lies at the upper end of the range in *Chelodina*  
351 (*Macrochelodina*) and *Chelodina (Macrodiremys)*. Indeed the reconstruction suggests that the  
352 total length of the intergular was likely to be around 65 mm, which is 2.3 times the length of the  
353 shared seam between the pair of pectoral scutes.

354 Finally supporting the subgeneric placement of *C. (C.) murrayi* is the absence of a distinct line  
355 demarcating the attachment of the dermis on the anterior surface of the anterior bridge strut. In  
356 short-necked chelodinines (fig. 7A) and in *Chelodina (Macrochelodina)* ssp. (pers. obs., NTM  
357 R35010, NTM R24813) there is a distinct, sharp line extending anterodorsally from the axillary  
358 notch to the peripherals of the carapace that indicates the position that the dermis attached to the  
359 shell and divides the ornamented external surface from the smooth inner surface. In *Chelodina*  
360 (*Chelodina*) however there is no distinct line and the external surface merges gradually with the  
361 internal surface (pers. obs., NTM R16325, R27168; Fig. 7B). The latter condition would appear  
362 to be the derived one and is a further synapomorphy of *Chelodina (Chelodina)*.

363 Within *Chelodina (Chelodina)* the large medially inflected and terminally expanded anterior  
364 bridge strut of the hyoplastron indicate that its relationships lie with the *C. (C.) novaeguineae*  
365 species complex (McCord & Thomson 2002). McCord and Thomson included *C. (C.)*  
366 *novaeguineae*, *C. (C.) canni*, *C. (C.) reimanni* and *C. (C.) mccordi* in this complex. I also include  
367 *C. (C.) pritchardi* because it has a large anterior bridge strut that contacts the first costal (Rhodin  
368 1994a) and is more closely related to other members of the complex than it is to either *C. (C.)*  
369 *longicollis* or *C. (C.) steindachneri* (Georges, Adams & McCord, 2002). The condition in basal  
370 species of the subgenus, i.e. *C. (C.) longicollis* and *C. (C.) steindachneri*, is to have reduced  
371 anterior bridge struts that do not extend far medially and fail to contact the costal bones  
372 (Thomson, 2000). The same condition obtains in *C. (Macrodiremys) colliei* (Thomson, 2000)  
373 which is the sister group to *C. (Chelodina)*, indicating that reduced anterior bridge struts are  
374 primitive condition for the subgenus. Thus the *C. (C.) novaeguineae* species complex have  
375 apparently reversed this condition and have medially extensive anterior bridge struts that broadly  
376 contact the costal bones like those of *Chelodina (Macrochelodina)* and short-necked chelodinines  
377 (Thomson, White & Georges, 1997; McCord & Thomson 2002).

### 378 **Unity of the hypodigm**

379 It is obvious that much of the diagnosis and description of the new taxon is reliant upon the  
380 referral of several unassociated specimens to a single taxon. It should be noted that even if there  
381 was more than one turtle taxon present at Alcoota, *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* would still  
382 stand as a valid taxon because the holotype epiplastron displays an autapomorphy as well as a  
383 synapomorphy of *Chelodina*. Nevertheless the referral of the Alcoota turtle sample to a single  
384 species is the most likely hypothesis based on the following observations.

385 Firstly multiple elements (the epiplastron, hyoplastron and the xiphiplastron) display  
386 synapomorphies of *Chelodina*: anteriorly enclosed intergular scute (Fig. 1A), enlarged foramen  
387 for Rathke's gland (Fig. 7C), rounded posterolateral margin of ischiadic scar (Fig. 10B, D). The  
388 hyoplastron also shows additional synapomorphies of *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*): lateral expansion  
389 of anterior lobe of plastron, absence of a distinct line of attachment of the dermis on the anterior  
390 bridge strut and a short pectoral-pectoral scute seam.

391 Other elements display plesiomorphies that are only present in *Chelodina* or *Pseudemydura*  
392 among Chelodiniinae. These plesiomorphies include the extension of the pectoral scute onto the  
393 posterior end of the epiplastron, a triple junction between the humeral, pectoral and intergular  
394 scute located on the epiplastron and a skin-carapace contact on the nuchal bone that lies posterior  
395 to the anterior margin of the carapace. None of the preserved elements show any characters of the  
396 distinctive *Pseudemydura*, thus these plesiomorphies add further support to the conclusion that  
397 most, if not all, of the Alcoota chelid specimens belong to *Chelodina*.

398 None of the preserved elements show any characters that are inconsistent with referral to  
399 *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*). These observations strongly suggest that only *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*) is  
400 present in the Alcoota assemblage. Extant *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*) species have almost  
401 exclusively allopatric ranges (Kennet et al., 1992; Rhodin 1994a&b; McCord & Thomson, 2002;  
402 Georges & Thomson, 2010). The Fitzroy-Dawson drainage includes hybrids between *C. (C.)*  
403 *canni* and *C. (C.) longicollis* and would appear to represent the sole river system where two  
404 species of *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*) overlap (Georges, Adams & McCord, 2002). Thus it is very  
405 unlikely that more than one species of *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*) is present in the Alcoota local  
406 fauna and the hypodigm of *C. (C.) murrayi* can be safely treated as pertaining to a single species.

#### 407 **Biogeography and Evolution of *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*)**

408 Extant members of the *C. (C.) novaeguineae* complex are restricted to the far north of Australia  
409 (*C. (C.) canni*), New Guinea (*C. (C.) novaeguineae*, *C. (C.) reimanni* and *C. (C.) pritchardi*) and  
410 Indonesia (*C. (C.) mccordi*). The presence of *C. (C.) murrayi* at Alcoota indicates that this clade  
411 extended further south in the past. At present it is not possible to determine if *C. (C.) murrayi* is  
412 an unusual southerly extension of an otherwise tropical clade, or whether the species group  
413 originated south of its present range and only later radiated in the tropics to the north of  
414 continental Australia.

415 The presence of a member of the *C. (C.) novaeguineae* species complex in the late Miocene  
416 indicates that stem members of *C. (C.) steindachneri* and *C. (C.) longicollis* were in existence at  
417 this time and their divergence was not related to climatic fluctuations of the Pleistocene as has  
418 been suggested (Kennet et al., 1992).

#### 419 **Palaeobiology**

420 Among chelodiniines it is the members of *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*) that are best able to cope with  
421 unpredictable drying events. *C. (C.) steindachneri* occupies some of the most arid habitats of any  
422 chelodinine, where surface water is ephemeral and infrequent (Cann, 1998). *C. (C.) longicollis*  
423 and *C. (C.) canni* are reported to travel many kilometres over land (Stott, 1987; Covacevich,

424 1990) and are capable of prolonged aestivation (Bill Cook, reported in Kennet et al., 1992; Roe &  
425 Georges, 2007).

426 It is therefore unsurprising to find that the Alcoota chelid belongs to *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*)  
427 because palaeoenvironmental indicators suggest that surface water in the Waite Basin, during the  
428 late Miocene, was prone to episodic drying events. It is notable that the Alcoota assemblage does  
429 not contain any fish. While a preservational bias may account for the lack of smaller fish bones it  
430 does not explain the absence of robust lungfish toothplates which are generally abundant in  
431 freshwater deposits throughout central and eastern Australia from the late Oligocene through to  
432 the Pleistocene (Kemp, 1991, 1993). The lack of lungfish toothplates therefore indicates that  
433 surface water at the Alcoota site was not permanent. Other aquatic taxa are scarce. *Chelodina*  
434 (*Chelodina*) *murrayi* itself requires a minimum of just two individuals to account for its known  
435 remains. Crocodiles are present, but these are massive, altirostral, semiziphodont mekosuchins of  
436 the genus *Baru* (pers. obs.) with clear indications that they specialised on large vertebrate prey  
437 (Willis, Murray & Megirian, 1990) and thus may not have been as strongly tied to deep  
438 permanent water as extant crocodylids are.

### 439 **Conclusions**

440 The chelid material from the late Miocene Alcoota Local Fauna of central Australia can be  
441 referred to a single species that is here named *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*) *murrayi*. Within the  
442 subgenus, the affinities of the new species lie with the *C. (C.) novaeguineae* species complex  
443 which now occurs in tropical habitats to the north of Alcoota (mostly outside continental  
444 Australia). Thus both the subgenus, and the *C. (C.) novaeguineae* species complex were more  
445 widespread in the past and diversification of the extant species began prior to the late Miocene.

### 446 **Acknowledgements**

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448 field program for over two decades by P. Murray and D. Megirian. Many people have  
449 participated in these excavations over the years but J. Archibald stands out as the collector of the  
450 holotype and several other important pieces of *Chelodina* (*Chelodina*) *murrayi*. Access to  
451 comparative specimens was facilitated by G. Dally and S. Horner. S. Thomson alerted me to the  
452 nomenclatural complications surrounding Chelodinae and its primary author.

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545 Figure 1. Holotype of *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., right epiplastron, NTM P5364. **A**,  
546 ventral view; **B**, dorsal view; **C**, anterior view; **D**, posterolateral view; **E**, interpretive drawing of  
547 **A**; **F**, interpretive drawing of **B**. Arrow indicates ventrally curved marginal flange. Abbreviations:  
548 da, line of dermal attachment; g, gular scute; h, humeral scute; ig, intergular scute; p, pectoral  
549 scute; sys, symphyseal surface. Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces, grey areas  
550 represent adherent matrix. Scale bar = 20 mm.

551 Figure 2. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., nuchal bone, NTM P5370. **A**, dorsal view; **B**,  
552 ventral view; **C**, interpretive drawing of **A**; **D**, interpretive drawing of **B**. Abbreviations: ce,  
553 cervical scute; da, line of the dermal attachment; m1, first marginal scute; ssc1, sutural surface for  
554 first costal bone; ssp1, sutural surface for first peripheral bone; v1, first vertebral scute. Hatched  
555 areas represent broken bone surfaces. Scale bar = 20 mm.

556 Figure 3. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., costal bones. **A-D**, proximal end of right  
557 costal 7, (NTM P5377). **A**, dorsal view; **B**, ventral view; **C**, **D**, distal end of right costal 2 (NTM  
558 P5409) in dorsal view; **E-I**, interpretive drawings of **A-D**, respectively; **J**, Interpretive drawing of  
559 **E**. Abbreviations: ia, iliac articulation surface; P1, P2, P4, first, second and fourth pleural scutes;  
560 r, medial end of rib; rg, rib gomphosis; ss, symphyseal surface; ssc6, sutural surface for sixth  
561 costal bone; sssp, sutural surface for suprapygal bone; V4, fourth vertebral scute; vps, vertebral-  
562 pleural scute seam. Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces, grey areas represent adherent  
563 matrix. Scale bar = 20 mm.

564 Figure 4 *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., peripheral bones. **A-F**, left second peripheral,  
565 (NTM P5337). **A**, dorsal view; **B**, ventral view; **C**, posterior view; **D**, interpretive drawing of **A**;  
566 **E**, interpretive drawing of **B**; **F**, interpretive drawing of **C**; **G-L**, left tenth peripheral, (NTM  
567 P5373). **G**, dorsal view; **H**, ventral view; **I**, anterior view; **J**, interpretive drawing of **G**; **K**,  
568 interpretive drawing of **H**; **L**, interpretive drawing of **I**. Abbreviations: da, line of the dermal  
569 attachment; M2, M3, M10, M11, second, third, tenth and eleventh marginal scutes; P1, P4, first  
570 and fourth pleural scutes; ssc1, ssc8, sutural surfaces for first and eighth costal bones; sspe3,  
571 sspe9, sspe11, sutural surfaces for third, ninth and eleventh peripheral bones. Scale bar = 20 mm.

572 Figure 5. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., reconstruction of plastron in ventral view.  
573 Abbreviations: AB, abdominal scute; AN, anal scute; ent, entoplastron; epip, epiplastron; FE,  
574 femoral scute; GU, gular scute; hyo, hyoplastron; hypo, hypoplastron; HU, humeral scute; IN,  
575 intergular scute; PE, pectoral scute; xip, xiphoplastron. Grey areas represent areas of missing bone  
576 that have been reconstructed. Scale bar = 50 mm

577 Figure 6. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., left hyoplastron, NTM P5369. **A**, dorsal view;  
578 **B**, ventral view; **C**, anterior view; **D**, lateral view; **E**, interpretive drawing of **A**; **F**, interpretive  
579 drawing of **B**; **G**, interpretive drawing of **C**; **H**, interpretive drawing of **D**. Abbreviations: AB,  
580 abdominal scute; abs, anterior bridge strut; HU, humeral scute; PE, pectoral scute; ssca, sutural  
581 surface for articulation with the carapace; ssen, sutural surface of the entoplastron; ssep, sutural  
582 surface of the epiplastron; sshy, sutural surface of the hypoplastron; sys, symphyseal surface.  
583 Scale bar = 20 mm.

584 Figure 7. Anterior bridge struts of various chelodines in oblique, anterior-ventral-lateral view.  
585 Top row: whole specimens with area of enlargement indicated by a box. Bottom row:  
586 enlargement of anterior bridge strut area. **A**, *Emydura* sp., NTM unregistered comparative  
587 collection; **B**, *Chelodina (Chelodina) longicollis*; **C**, *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi*. Dotted line  
588 indicates likely extent of foramen for the axillary duct of Rathke's gland. Note that sediment  
589 partly infills this notch. Abbreviations: da, line of dermal attachment; rgf, foramen for the axillary  
590 duct of Rathke's gland.

591 Figure 8. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., left hypoplastron, NTM P5375. **A**, dorsal  
592 (internal) view; **B**, ventral (external) view; **C**, Interpretive drawing of **A**; **D**, Interpretive drawing  
593 of **B**. Abbreviations: AB, abdominal scute; b, bridge; FE, femoral scute; ssh, sutural surface for  
594 the hypoplastron; ssx, sutural surface for the xiphiplastron; sys, symphyseal surface. Hatched areas  
595 represent broken bone surfaces. Scale bar = 20 mm.

596 Figure 9. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., left hypoplastron, NTM P9810. **A**, dorsal  
597 (internal) view; **B**, ventral (external) view; **C**, Interpretive drawing of **A**; **D**, Interpretive drawing  
598 of **B**. Abbreviations: AB, abdominal scute; b, bridge; FE, femoral scute; ssh, sutural surface for  
599 the hypoplastron; ssx, sutural surface for the xiphiplastron; sys, medial symphyseal surface.  
600 Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces, grey areas represent patches of adherent matrix.  
601 Scale bar = 20 mm.

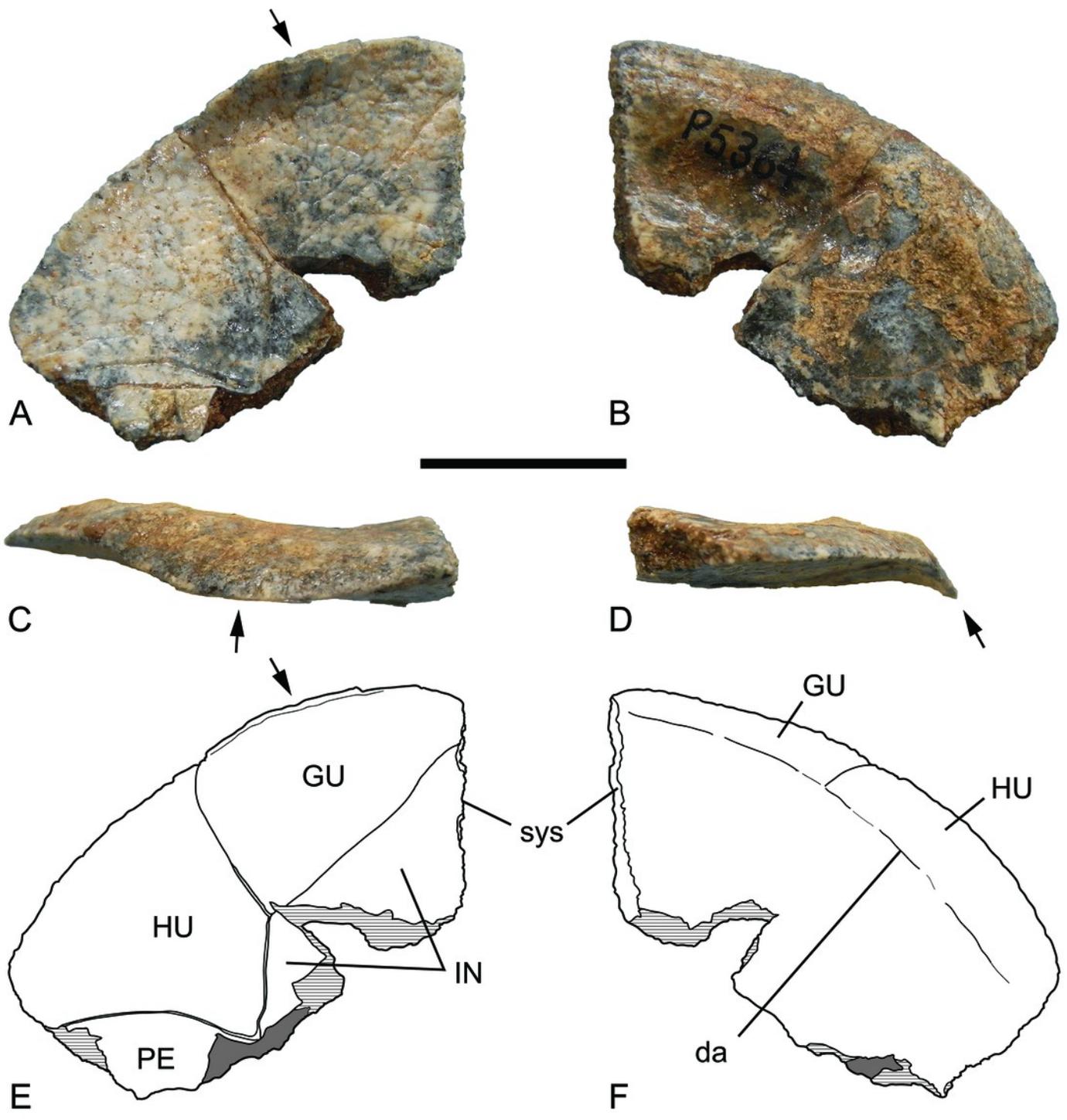
602 Figure 10. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., right xiphiplastron, NTM P5374. **A**, ventral  
603 view; **B**, dorsal view; **C**, interpretive drawing of **A**; **D**, interpretive drawing of **B**; **E**,  
604 reconstruction of articulated xiphiplastron pair in dorsal view. Abbreviations: AN, anal scute; FE,  
605 femoral scute; sshy, sutural surface for hypoplastron; ssi, sutural surface for ischium; ssp, sutural  
606 surface for pubis; sys, symphyseal surface; tm, possible tooth mark. Hatched areas represent  
607 broken bone surfaces, grey areas represent areas of adherent matrix. Scale bar = 20 mm

—

# Figure 1

Figure 1. Holotype of *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., right epiplastron, NTM P5364.

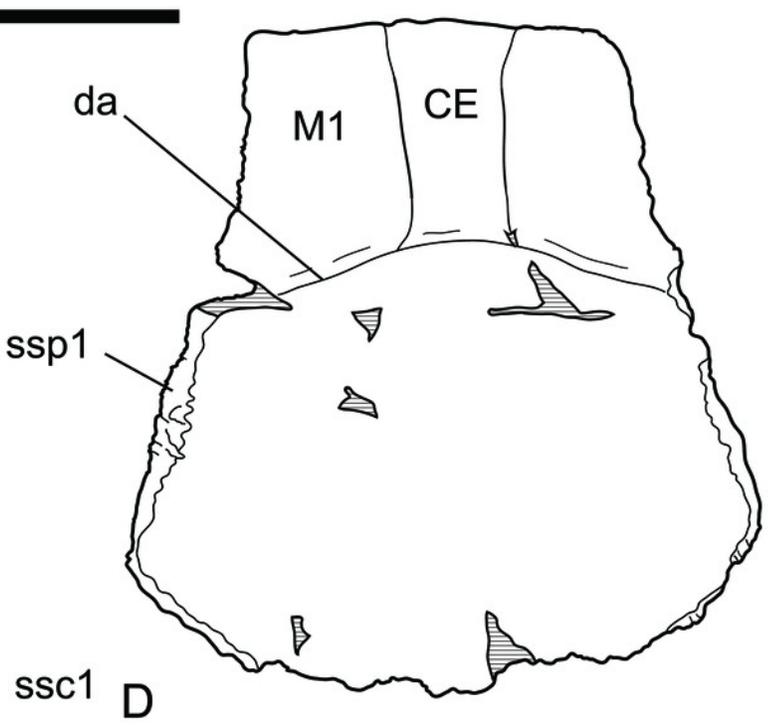
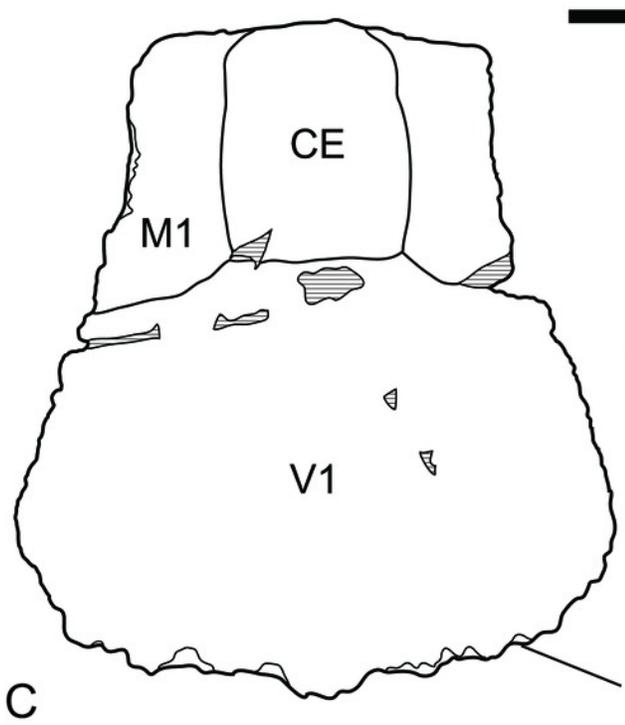
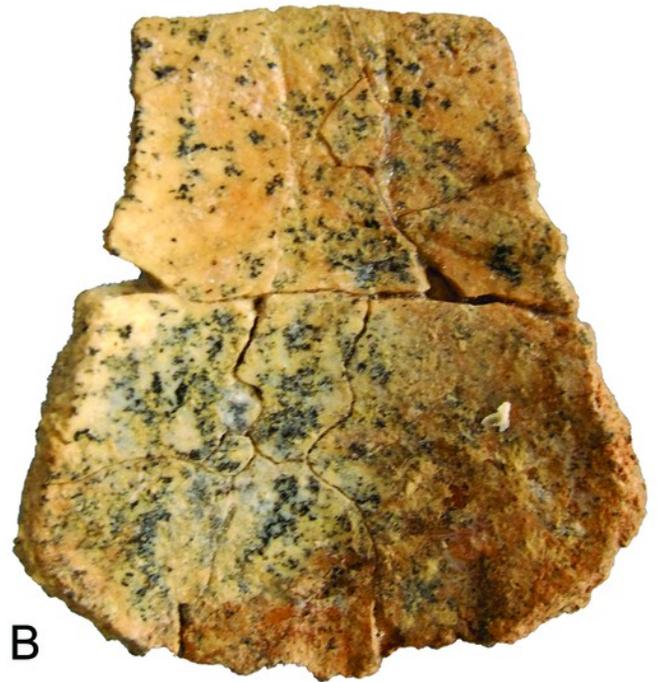
**A**, ventral view; **B**, dorsal view; **C**, anterior view; **D**, posterolateral view; **E**, interpretive drawing of **A**; **F**, interpretive drawing of **B**. Arrow indicates ventrally curved marginal flange. Abbreviations: da, line of dermal attachment; g, gular scute; h, humeral scute; ig, intergular scute; p, pectoral scute; sys, symphyseal surface. Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces, grey areas represent adherent matrix. Scale bar = 20 mm.



# Figure 2

Figure 2. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., nuchal bone, NTM P5370.

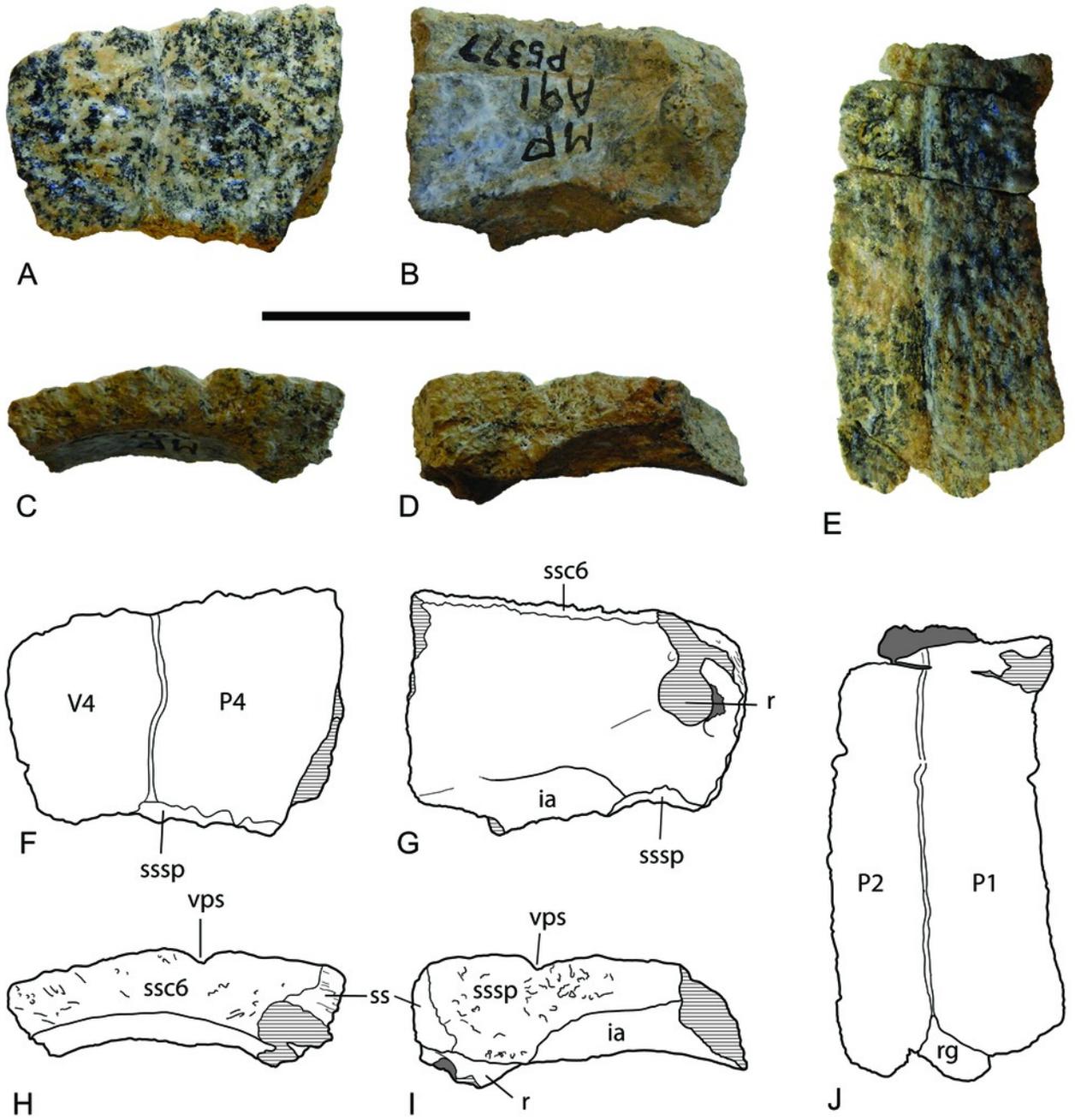
**A** , dorsal view; **B**, ventral view; **C**, interpretive drawing of A; **D**, interpretive drawing of B. Abbreviations: ce, cervical scute; da, line of the dermal attachment; m1, first marginal scute; ssc1, sutural surface for first costal bone; ssp1, sutural surface for first peripheral bone; v1, first vertebral scute. Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces. Scale bar = 20 mm.



# Figure 3

Figure 3. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., costal bones.

**A -D**, proximal end of right costal 7, (NTM P5377). **A**, dorsal view; **B**, ventral view; **C**, **D**, **E**, distal end of right costal 2 (NTM P5409) in dorsal view; **F-I**, interpretive drawings of **A-D**, respectively; **J**, Interpretive drawing of **E**. Abbreviations: ia, iliac articulation surface; P1, P2, P4, first, second and fourth pleural scutes; r, medial end of rib; rg, rib gomphosis; ss, symphyseal surface; ssc6, sutural surface for sixth costal bone; sssp, sutural surface for suprapygal bone; V4, fourth vertebral scute; vps, vertebral-pleural scute seam. Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces, grey areas represent adherent matrix. Scale bar = 20 mm.



# Figure 4

Figure 4 *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., peripheral bones.

**A-F** , left second peripheral, (NTM P5337). A, dorsal view; B, ventral view; C, posterior view; D, interpretive drawing of A; E, interpretive drawing of B; F, interpretive drawing of C; **G-L**, left tenth peripheral, (NTM P5373). G, dorsal view; H, ventral view; I, anterior view; J, interpretive drawing of G; K, interpretive drawing of H; L, interpretive drawing of I.

Abbreviations: da, line of the dermal attachment; M2, M3, M10, M11, second, third, tenth and eleventh marginal scutes; P1, P4, first and fourth pleural scutes; ssc1, ssc8, sutural surfaces for first and eighth costal bones; sspe3, sspe9, sspe11, sutural surfaces for third, ninth and eleventh peripheral bones. Scale bar = 20 mm.



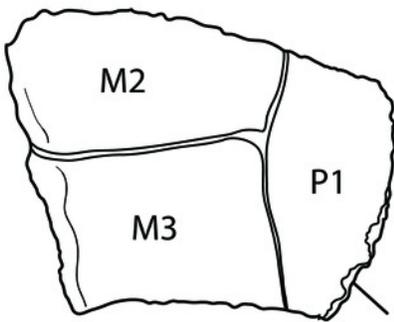
A



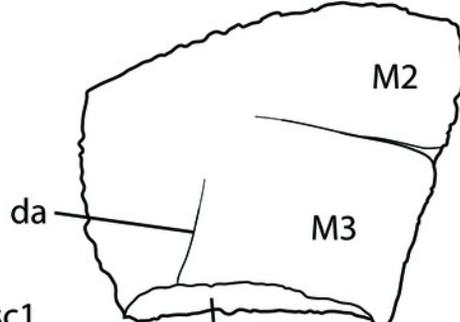
B



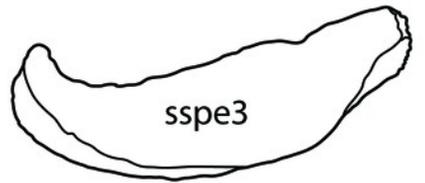
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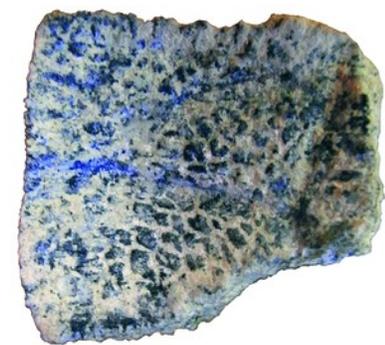
D



E



F



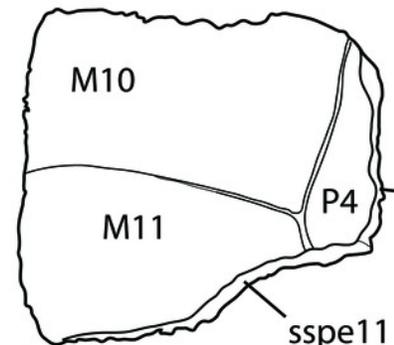
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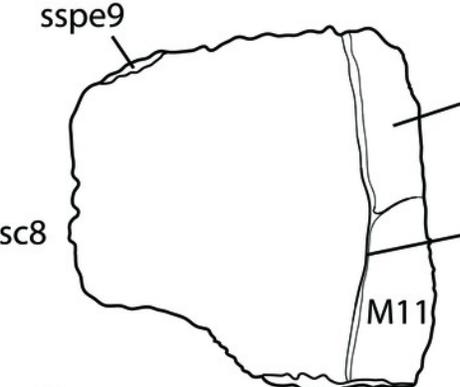
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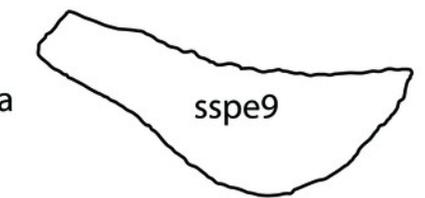
I



J



K

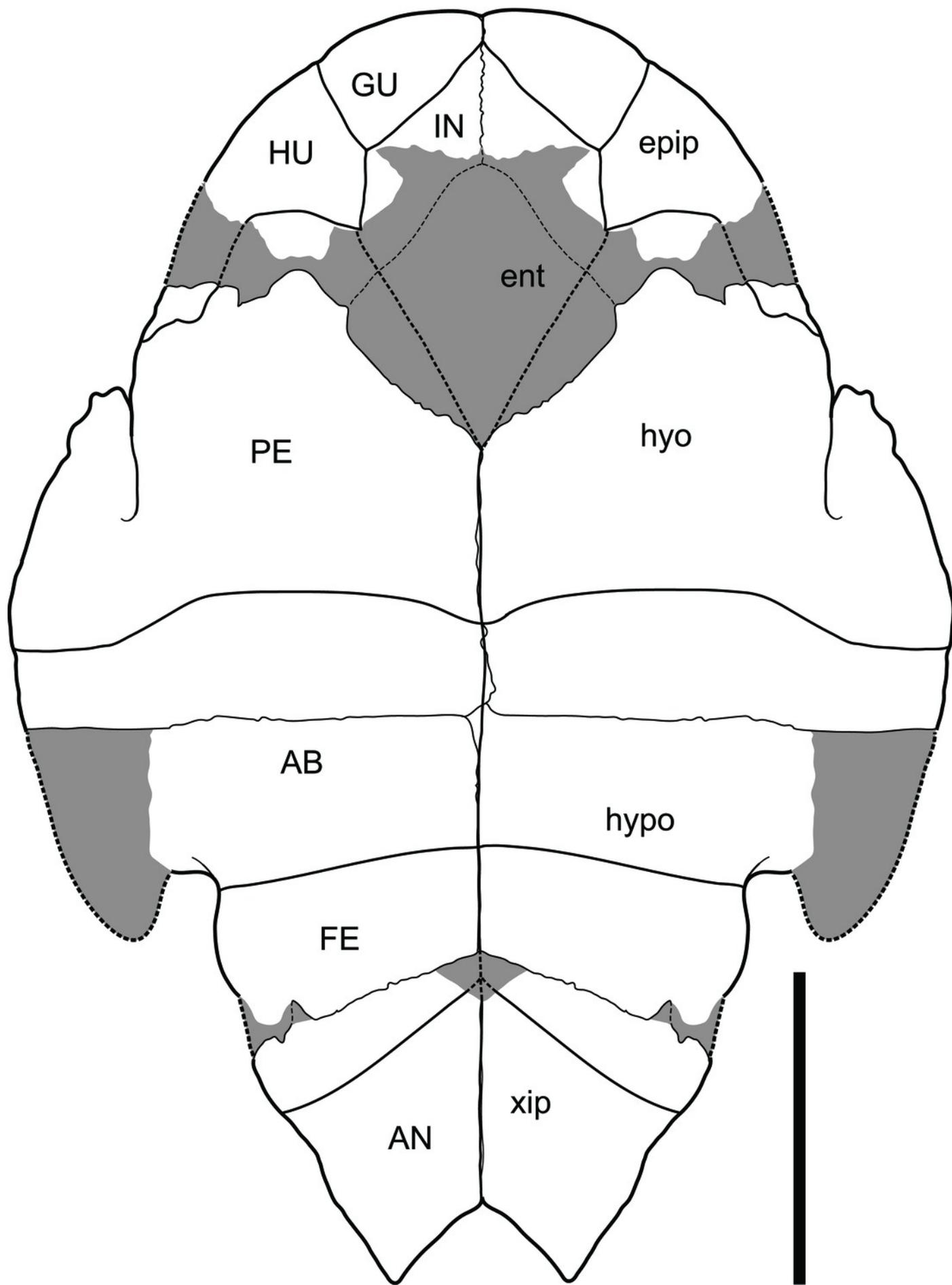


L

# Figure 5

Figure 5. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., reconstruction of plastron in ventral view.

Abbreviations: AB, abdominal scute; AN, anal scute; ent, entoplastron; epip, epiplastron; FE, femoral scute; GU, gular scute; hyo, hyoplastron; hypo, hypoplastron; HU, humeral scute; IN, intergular scute; PE, pectoral scute; xip, xiphiplastron. Grey areas represent areas of missing bone that have been reconstructed. Scale bar = 50 mm

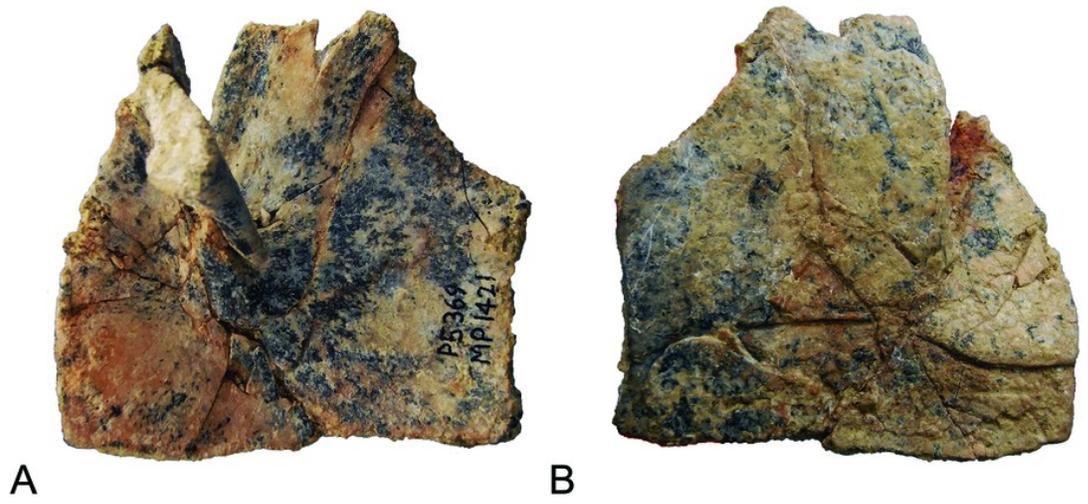


# Figure 6

Figure 6. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., left hyoplastron, NTM P5369.

**A**, dorsal view; **B**, ventral view; **C**, anterior view; **D**, lateral view; **E**, interpretive drawing of A; **F**, interpretive drawing of B; **G**, interpretive drawing of C; **H**, interpretive drawing of D.

Abbreviations: AB, abdominal scute; abs, anterior bridge strut; HU, humeral scute; PE, pectoral scute; ssca, sutural surface for articulation with the carapace; ssen, sutural surface of the entoplastron; ssep, sutural surface of the epiplastron; sshy, sutural surface of the hypoplastron; sys, symphyseal surface. Scale bar = 20 mm.



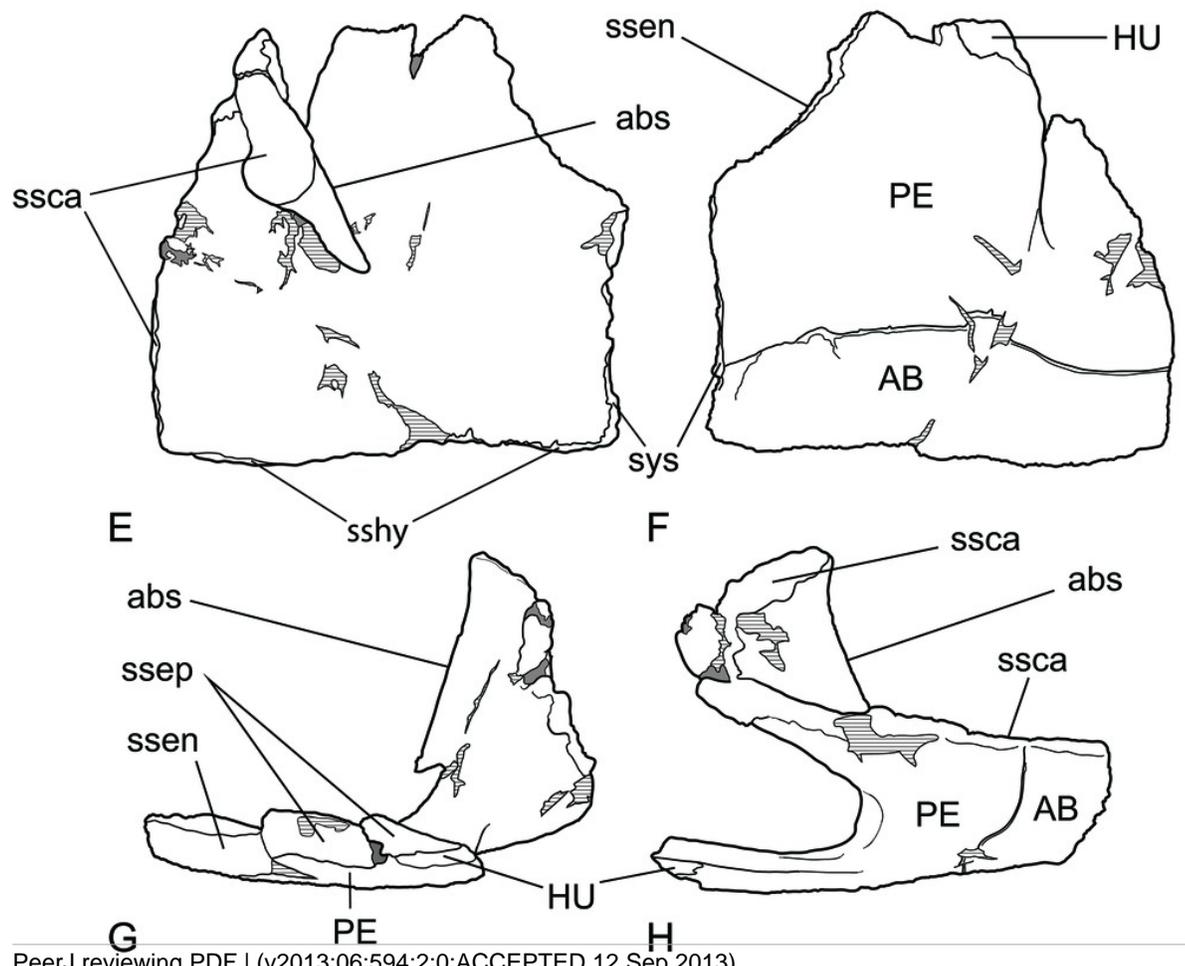
A

B



C

D



E

F

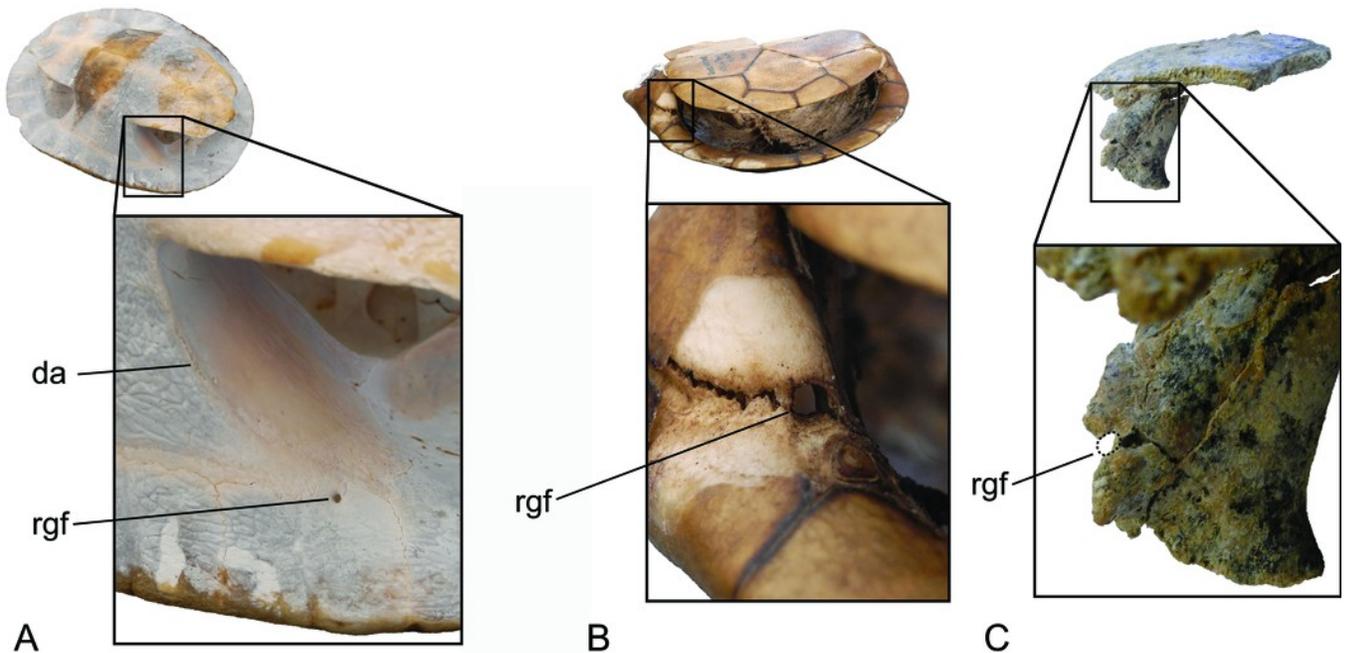
G

H

# Figure 7

Figure 7. Anterior bridge struts of various chelodines in oblique, anterior-ventral-lateral view.

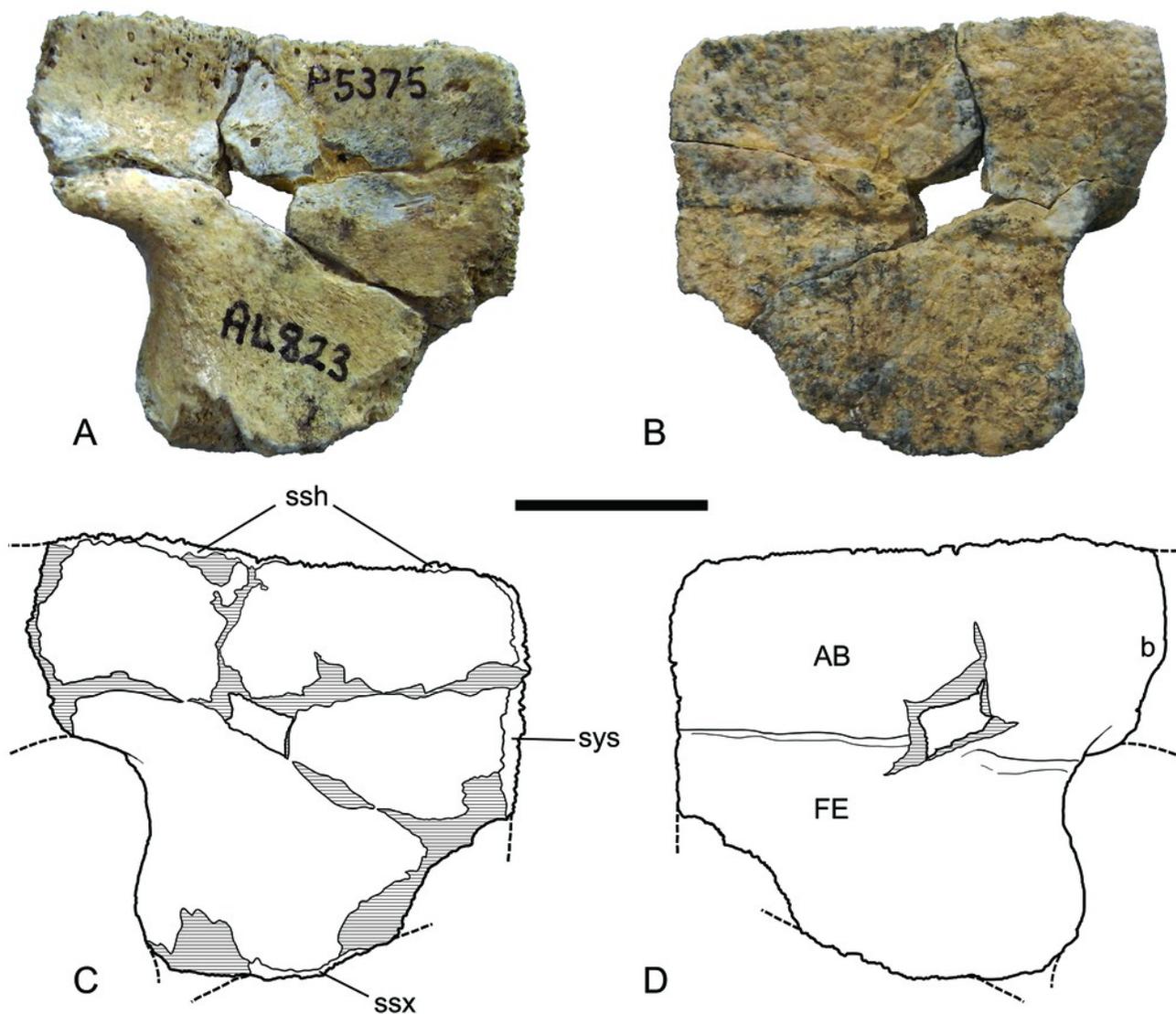
Top row: whole specimens with area of enlargement indicated by a box. Bottom row: enlargement of anterior bridge strut area. **A**, *Emydura* sp., NTM unregistered comparative collection; **B**, *Chelodina (Chelodina) longicollis*; **C**, *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi*. Dotted line indicates likely extent of foramen for the axillary duct of Rathke's gland. Note that sediment partly infills this notch. Abbreviations: da, line of dermal attachment; rgf, foramen for the axillary duct of Rathke's gland.



# Figure 8

Figure 8. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., left hypoplastron, NTM P5375.

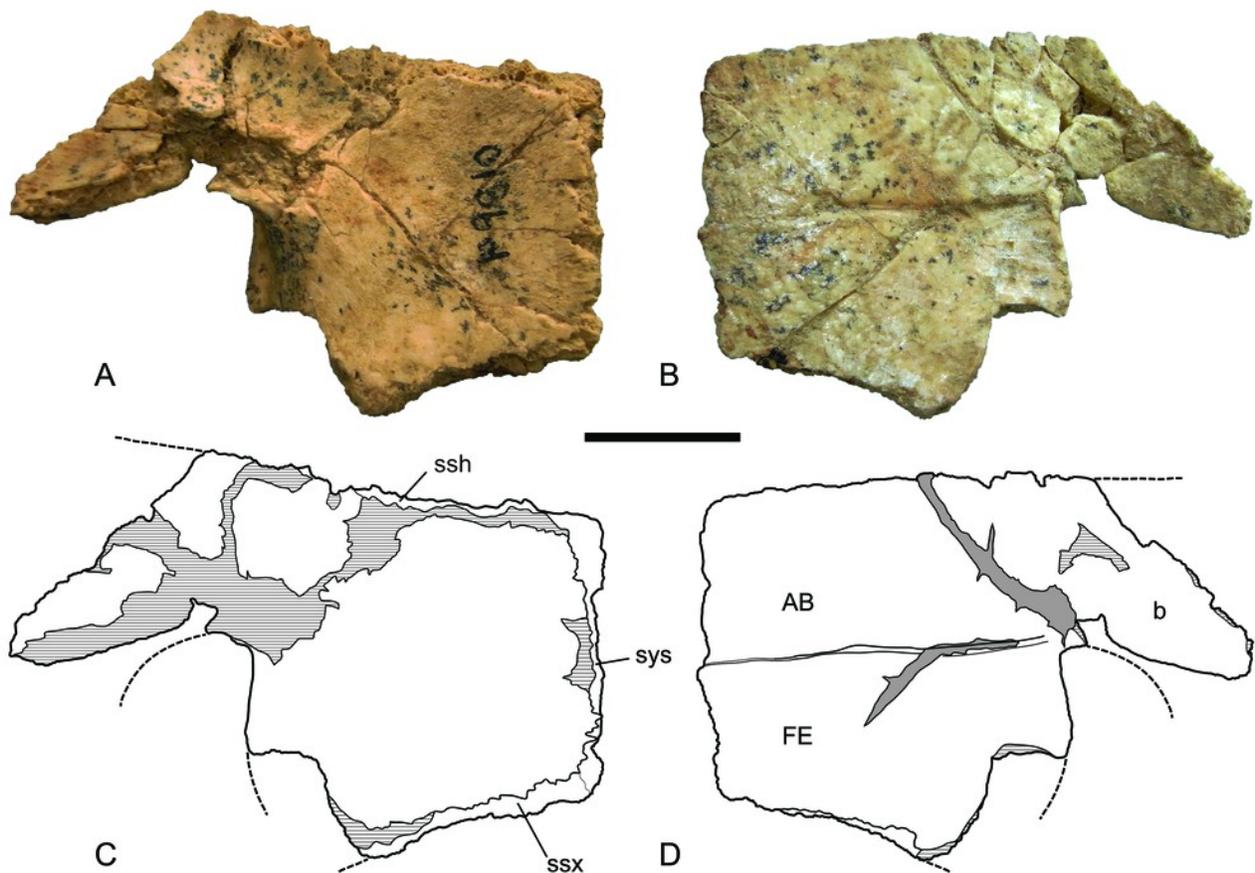
**A**, dorsal (internal) view; **B**, ventral (external) view; **C**, Interpretive drawing of **A**; **D**, Interpretive drawing of **B**. Abbreviations: AB, abdominal scute; b, bridge; FE, femoral scute; ssh, sutural surface for the hyoplastron; ssx, sutural surface for the xiphiplastron; sys, symphyseal surface. Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces. Scale bar = 20 mm.



# Figure 9

Figure 9. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., left hypoplastron, NTM P9810.

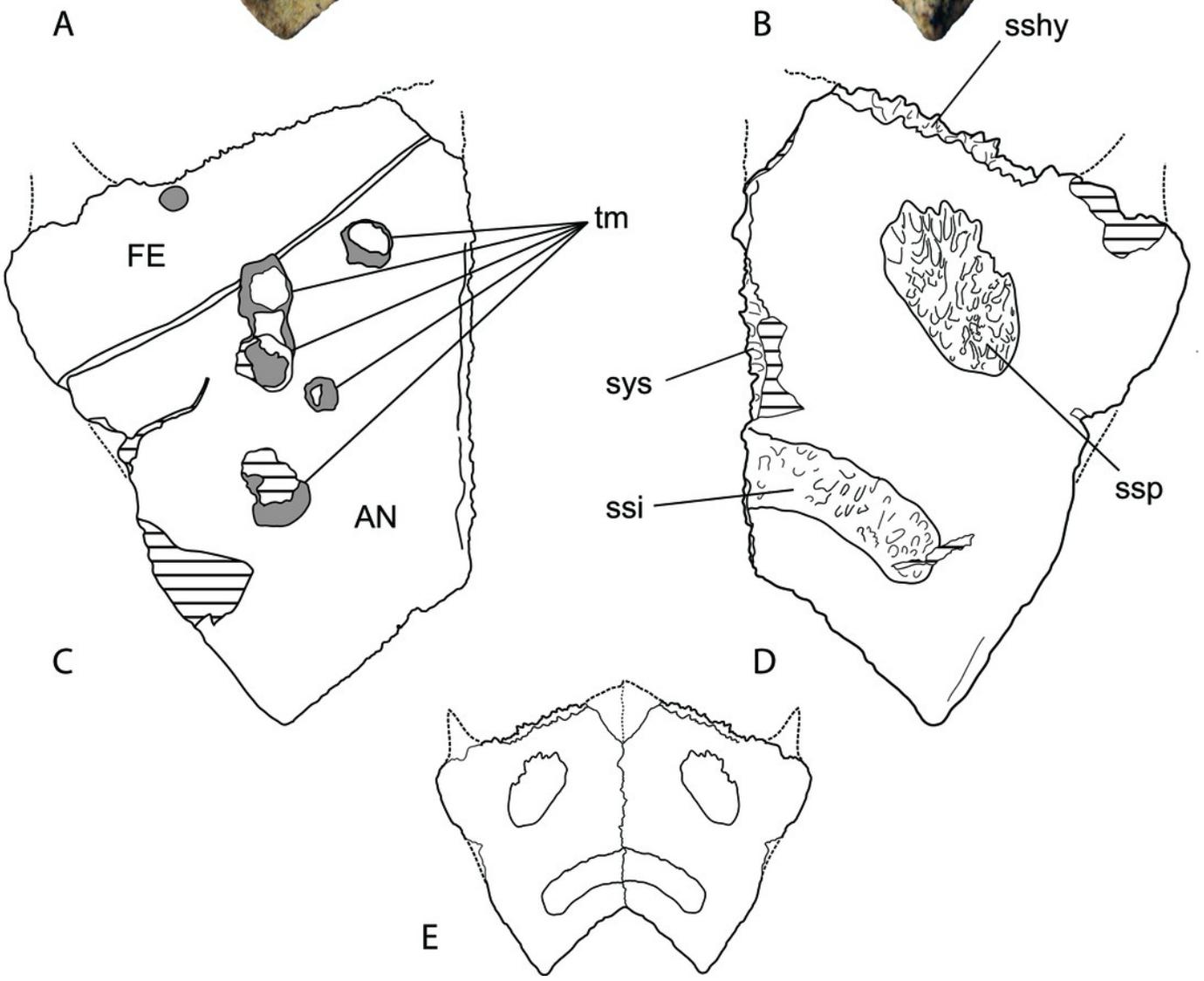
**A**, dorsal (internal) view; **B**, ventral (external) view; **C**, Interpretive drawing of A; **D**, Interpretive drawing of B. Abbreviations: AB, abdominal scute; b, bridge; FE, femoral scute; ssh, sutural surface for the hyoplastron; ssx, sutural surface for the xiphiplastron; sys, medial symphyseal surface. Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces, grey areas represent patches of adherent matrix. Scale bar = 20 mm.



# Figure 10

Figure 10. *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* sp. nov., right xiphiplastron, NTM P5374.

**A** , ventral view; **B**, dorsal view; **C**, interpretive drawing of **A**; **D**, interpretive drawing of **B**; **E**, reconstruction of articulated xiphiplastron pair in dorsal view. Abbreviations: AN, anal scute; FE, femoral scute; sshy, sutural surface for hypoplastron; ssi, sutural surface for ischium; ssp, sutural surface for pubis; sys, symphyseal surface; tm, tooth mark. Hatched areas represent broken bone surfaces, grey areas represent areas of adherent matrix. Scale bar = 20 mm



## **Table 1** (on next page)

Measurements of selected elements of *Chelodina (Chelodina) murrayi* n. sp..

ML = midline length, AW = anterior width, PW = posterior width, MS = length midline symphysis, HpS = length of suture with hypoplastron, HS = length of suture with hyoplastron, XS = length of suture with xiphiplastron, MW = marginal width.

Element	NTM	ML (mm)	AW (mm)	PW (mm)	MS (mm)	HpS (mm)	HS (mm)	XS (mm)	MW (mm)
<b>Nuchal</b>	P5370	57.3	32.0	52.0	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Epiplastron</b>	P5364	-	-	-	(23.9)	-	-	-	-
<b>Hyo-plastron</b>	P5369	-	-	-	41.3	71.9	-	-	-
<b>Hypo-plastron</b>	P9810	-	-	-	33.6		(45.6)	(27.7)	
<b>Xiphi-plastron</b>	P5375	-	-	-	(26.1)	-	(49.8)	-	-
<b>Xiphi-plastron</b>	P5374	-	-	-	(34.4)	(34.3)			
<b>Peripheral 2</b>	P5337	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22.0
<b>Peripheral 10</b>	P5373	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24.0

**Table 2**(on next page)

Ratio of intergular scute length to length of the shared seam between pectoral scutes in various chelodnines.

Species	Ratio	Source
<i>Pseudemydura umbrina</i>	1.35	Burbidge et al. 1974, fig. 1
<i>Emydura sp.</i>	0.55	NTM (MCA unregistered)
<i>Chelodina (Macrodiremys) collei</i>	1.43	Burbidge et al. 1974, fig. 2
<i>Chelodina (Macrochelodina) rugosa</i>	1.53	NTM R24814
<i>Chelodina (Macrochelodina) rugosa</i>	1.40	Thomson et al. 2000, fig. 6b
<i>Chelodina (Macrochelodina) burrungandjii</i>	1.23	NTM R35010
<i>Chelodina (Macrochelodina) burrungandjii</i>	1.14	Thomson et al. 2000, fig. 6a
<i>Chelodina (Macrochelodina) parkeri</i>	1.18	Rhodin & Mittermeier 1976, fig. 15
<i>Chelodina (Chelodina) longicollis</i>	3.25	NTM R27168
<i>Chelodina (Chelodina) canni</i>	5.35	NTM R16325
<i>Chelodina (Chelodina) novaeguineae</i>	3.20	McCord & Thompson 2002, fig. 3f
<i>Chelodina (Chelodina) novaeguineae</i>	2.79	Rhodin 1994a, fig. 7
<i>Chelodina (Chelodina) pritchardi</i>	3.13	Rhodin 1994a, fig. 1
<i>Chelodina (Chelodina) reimanni</i>	2.37	Philippen & Grossmann 1990, fig. 2