

HERPETOLOGICAL REVIEW — NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
TESTUDINES — TURTLES

GLYPTEMYS INSCULPTA (Wood Turtle). **PREDATION.** *Glyptemys insculpta* is a semi-aquatic emydid turtle native to the midwestern and northeastern United States and eastern Canada. This species is imperiled across much of its range and is legally protected in all states and provinces where it occurs. In this report, we document *G. insculpta* egg predation by *Peromyscus maniculatus bairdii* (Prairie Deer Mouse), which occurred within a two-week period of peak hatchling emergence in 2025 at a nesting site in Washburn County, Wisconsin, USA (exact location undisclosed due to conservation status). Part of the nesting area used by turtles at this site is protected by a four-sided enclosed nesting structure with a gap along at the bottom to allow turtles to enter and exit (Fig. 1; Bougie et al. 2024. *Northeast. Nat.* 31:G171–G183).

Glyptemys insculpta began ovipositing within the nesting structure on 7 June 2025, and the first hatchlings emerged 60 days later on 4 August. Hatchlings continued to emerge through 11 September 2025. During hatchling emergence, the nesting box and surrounding area were checked each morning, noon, and evening for at least 30 minutes. Nests from which hatchlings were observed to emerge were recorded on a map of the protection structure and the nearby area, along with the number of hatchlings directly observed emerging onto the ground surface. A Reconyx trail camera, programmed to continuously take images every five minutes as well as when triggered by motion, monitored predator activity on the east side of the nest protection structure.

From a total of 21 *G. insculpta* nests constructed within and just outside of the nest protection structure, we observed at least 58 hatchlings emerge onto the surface of the ground. During the two-week peak of hatchling emergence (18 August–3 September 2025), the monitoring camera yielded four photos of *P. maniculatus* carrying unhatched, apparently intact, turtle eggs (e.g., Fig. 1). These eggs appeared to come from nests exposed by exiting hatchlings, and from nests outside of the nest protection structure.

While predation by *Peromyscus* species has been well-established on the nests and eggs of various bird species (e.g., on *Actitis macularia* [Spotted Sandpiper]; Maxson and Oring 1978. *Auk* 6:582–584; on *Protonotaria citrea* [Prothonotary Warbler]; Guillory 1987. *J. Field Ornith.* 58:425–427), reports of mouse predation on turtle eggs and hatchlings are less common. However, small mammal (including *Peromyscus*) predation on *Glyptemys muhlenbergii* (Bog Turtle) eggs and hatchlings has been documented as a significant cause of nest loss at some nesting sites (reviewed in Knoer et al. 2021. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 85:293–302). To our knowledge, this report represents the first documentation of *Peromyscus* predation on *G. insculpta* eggs. Additionally, our observations of mice carrying off whole, intact eggs suggest that this source of egg loss may be more common than might be suspected, as it is difficult to detect other than by camera and hard to prevent using methods designed for larger mammals (Vraniak and Geller 2017. *Herpetol. Rev.* 48:424–425).

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FIG. 1. Trail camera image of *Peromyscus maniculatus* (Prairie Deer Mouse) carrying an unhatched *Glyptemys insculpta* (Wood Turtle) egg.



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