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GOPHERUS BERLANDIERI (Texas Tortoise). MEXICO: COAHUILA: Municipality of Cuatro Ciénegas de Carranza: Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Cuatrociénquitos, 2 km SW of El Venado (26.839861°N, 101.956728°W; WGS84), 762 m elev. 29 August 2010. L. M. Coghill and J. Chavez-Campos. Verified by Luis Canseco Marquez. Colección Herpetológica del Museo de Zoología Alfonso L. Herrera, Facultad de Ciencias, UNAM (MZFC ID-014). First confirmed record for the Municipality of Cuatro Ciénegas de Carranza, extending the known distribution 53.4 km SW from the closest localities between Ciudad Hermanas and Monclova, Municipality of Absalos (Lemos Espinal and Smith 2007. Amphibians and Reptiles of the State of Coahuila, Mexico. UNAM and CONABIO, México, D.F. xii + 550 pp.). A previous record, without voucher or locality information, reported this tortoise as a likely introduced species in the Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Cuatrociénquitos (McCoy 1984. J. Arizona-Nevada Acad. Sci. 19:49–59). We found multiple adult individuals of varying sizes and sexes in a single day crossing a road, suggesting an established population; a genetic study is needed to determine if the population is native or introduced. All were photographed, but not collected, because they were found in a protected area.

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GOPHERUS POLYPHEMUS (Gopher Tortoise). USA: FLORIDA: Collier Co.: Ten Thousand Islands. Fakahatchee Island (25.860°N, 81.496°W; NAD83) and Dismal Key (25.890°N, 81.560°W; NAD83) are located 11 and 17 km W of Everglades City, respectively, and approximately 2 km offshore. One adult shell and one live adult tortoise were observed near the western edge of Fakahatchee Island on 26 October 2010, and four adult tortoises and five active burrows were observed near the center of Dismal Key on 27 October 2010 by MTJ and LLW. Verified by J. Martinez. Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ R-188665; photo voucher).

These observations represent previously unknown coastal occurrences of Gopher Tortoise along the 100 km section of coast between Marco Island (Collier Co.) and Cape Sable (Monroe Co.) (e.g., Kushlan and Mazzotti 1984. J. Herpetol. 18[3]:231–239; Mushinsky and McCoy 1994. In Bury and Germano [eds.], Biology of North American Turtles, pp. 39–47. National Biological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Research 13; NatureServe 2010. NatureServe Explorer: An Online Encyclopedia of Life. ver. 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. http://www.natureserve.org/explorer. Accessed 15 April 2011). Furthermore, these occurrences are largely of anthropogenic origin, constructed by Native Americans (Calusa) prior to the 16th century. They are part of a series of large Calusa shell mounds distributed throughout the northern Ten Thousand Islands (Widmer 1988. The Evolution of the Calusa: A Nonagricultural Chiefdom of the Southwest Florida Coast. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama). Tortoises may occur on other large, isolated shell mounds between Marco Island and Cape Sable, although we have failed to detect tortoises or burrows on three other large shell mounds in the vicinity of Fakahatchee and Dismal: Four Brothers Key, Russell Key, and Sandfly Island. It is unknown whether these tortoises naturally colonized Fakahatchee Island and Dismal Key or were introduced there by Calusa or more recent (i.e., 19th–20th century) settlers.

These observations were made while conducting surveys for box turtles under a research permit from the National Park Service (Everglades National Park; EVER-2009-SCI-0038), a special use permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge), research authorization from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve) and a scientific collection permit from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (LSSC-10-00103).

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