

more widespread and abundant species. The county distribution maps show the most recent data collected by the Georgia Herp Atlas. In addition, the map shading shows the expected range within each county when habitat requirements are added. The color photos of the adults and larval stages with each species account are an important feature. The selection of photos, of which all but a few very rare species are of Georgia specimens, is excellent. Photos are of high quality and appropriately sized and the inclusion of images showing pattern variety and color phases provides valuable information.

The Amphibians and Reptiles of Georgia omits a dichotomous key to the species. While this is a common feature in many state works, the lack of a key is probably not a significant drawback as most general users tend to flip through the photos and do not use keys when they are provided.

The inclusion of a county map in the introduction and back inside cover is very handy for those of us not from Georgia. It would be a task to remember all 159 counties.

The references are arranged by topic and species. I find it cumbersome, but a more general reader looking for info on one species would probably find it convenient.

The listings of amphibian and reptile (frogs and alligators) calls on the University of Georgia Press website is an innovative way of accessing acoustic information. I have never used the CDs that are found in the back of some state books, but I have already visited the web to listen to the calls. My one concern is the University of Georgia Press's ability to maintain the website for years to come.

The Amphibians and Reptiles of Georgia is a tremendous resource to herpetologists and naturalists working in Georgia and throughout the southeastern United States and should be on every bookshelf. The flexible cover makes it suitable to use in the field, even though the size may limit some people from putting it in their pack.

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The Culinary Herpetologist, by Ernest A. Liner. 2005. Bibliomania! (www.herpllit.com). vii + 382 pp. Hardcover. US\$ 37.95. ISBN 1-932871-05-5 (Paperback US\$ 29.95. ISBN 1-932871-06-3).

OLIVIER S. G. PAUWELS

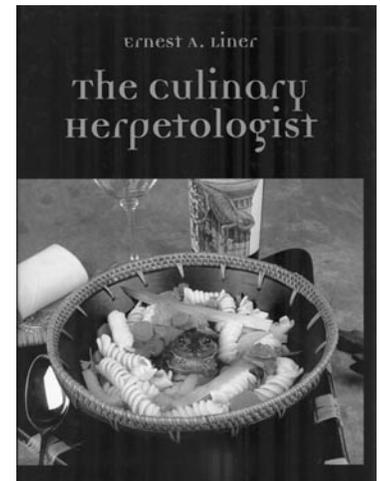
*Département des Vertébrés Récents
Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique
Rue Vautier 29, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: osgpauwels@yahoo.fr*

Gastronomy and herpetology being two of my main Epicurean passions, I have to confess that I was awaiting my copy of Ernie Liner's book with much impatience and salivation. One of my favorite hobbies, certainly shared with millions of people, is to look at the pictures in cookbooks. The satisfaction is often not as great as eating the illustrated dishes, but the principle is the same as visiting an art gallery. Seeing Liner's book for the first time, I examined its front

cover, illustrated by a photograph of a live frog bathing in an Italian noodle soup, which I found of dubious humor, and its back cover, showing *Leiolepis* lizards being prepared, which reminded me some marvellous meals I had in northern Thailand. My disappointment was great when I opened the book and realized that these are the only photographs that the book includes.

This reasonably priced, well-bound book is printed on a good quality glossy paper, and is of a large size (8.5 x 11 inches) that is practical for culinary use, with characters big enough to be read while busy cooking. It includes a brief introduction (4 pages), followed by 952 recipes arranged in successive chapters (with 103 additional auxiliary recipes, especially for accompanying sauces and marinades), respectively on salamanders (26 recipes), frogs and toads (193), crocodiles (379), turtles (281), lizards (9), snakes (34), and recipes of indigenous people (30). The book closes after a glossary, an index, and a short biography of the author, who is a renowned specialist on the herpetofauna of Mexico. A few references to published works are made in the main text, but there is no literature cited section. 'Deep fried brandied Amphiuma,' 'Seafood stuffed frog legs,' 'Crumbed toad legs,' 'Alligator cabbage rolls,' 'Snapping Turtle in a pot,' 'Florida Green Turtle soup,' 'Cayenne Iguana stew,' and 'Baked snake with berries' are a few randomly-selected examples of the proposed recipes.

The recipes are generally short, and the ingredients are often not very specific ('frog,' 'mushroom,' 'beer,' 'white wine,' etc., without mentioning the species, the variety or the brand). This gives much space for improvisation and is actually an encouragement to apply the recipes to what ingredients are available and create personal and local versions of the recipes. The recipes are designed for a



variable number of persons, sometimes one, sometimes many more (I noted that the 'Wild game sauce piquant,' proposed for use with alligator or turtle meat, was designed for 60 persons, and that the 'Bayou Alligator sauce piquant' recipe was intended for 100+ persons). The units of measurement used and brands cited make the book practical mostly for the American public.

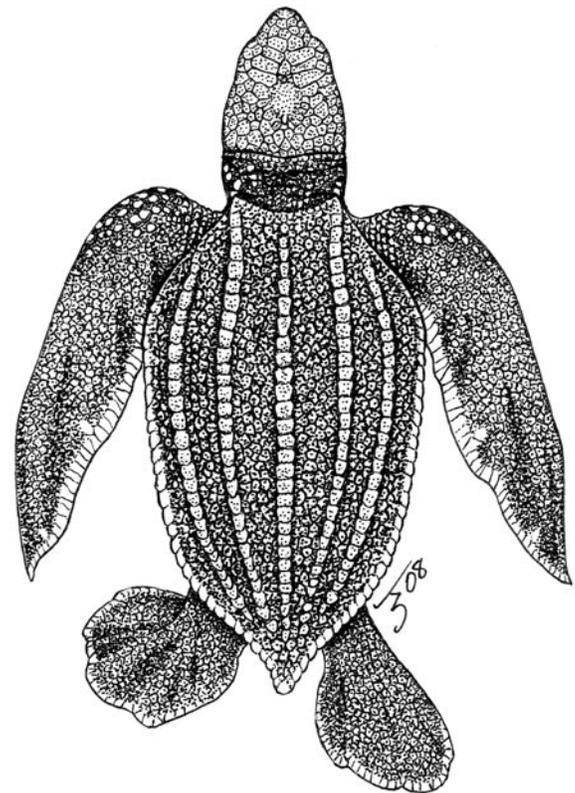
The publisher's note at the beginning of the book stresses the contradiction between herp conservation and the publication of a reptile and amphibian cookbook, with a hope that readers will replace the proposed herps in the various recipes with chicken. I disagree. First, many herp species are not endangered, especially those easily farmed (such as some crocodiles, softshell turtles, etc.), and their controlled consumption as food does not endanger them. Second, you do not replace a recipe's main ingredient by another without dramatically altering the result. By experience, I know for example that a ranid and a pipid do not taste the same, and that a ranid and a chicken do not taste the same at all. The recipes in the book most often do not specify which exact herp species has to be used, except in a few cases, where even highly endangered species are proposed, such as Leatherback Turtle, etc. (the Index does not list the scientific names used in the book, and only some of them are in the Glossary). It is a question of common sense and civic responsibility on the part of readers to use taxa that are currently not endangered or protected in their area, and the author is right to mention all species used in the original recipes he collected without obscuring the use of currently endangered species. In several cases the author stresses the fact that one species or another is protected.

Besides the absence of photographs, my main disappointment was that there is only rarely an indication of the geographical or cultural origin of the recipes. Gastronomy is in my opinion one way to discover other peoples' cultures, and a way to mentally travel while comfortably sitting at one's home dinner table. Even the section on indigenous people's recipes most often does not specify the country or ethnic group of origin. Moreover, I do not understand what the author meant by 'indigenous' and 'native,' and what were the criteria for putting these recipes in a distinct section. Outside this indigenous section, a series of 15 recipes are given in Spanish, i.e. the original language in which the author received them, 'to add to their historical value' says the author, but without mentioning from which country they originate! The author explains in the introduction that he gathered the recipes over decades, from various sources including anonymous ones, with no intention to be exhaustive. Whether the given recipes were born in the imaginative mind of a single person or are part of the gastronomy of a whole cultural or ethnic group is not specified. The recipes in the present book are thus a compilation of recipes the author heard of or encountered about preparing herps, with no scientific nor cultural pretention.

The author mentions (page 347) that 'only the larger species of lizards are of any value as food,' and the only lacertilians in the recipes he provides are *Iguana*, *Ctenosaura* and *Varanus* (there is one recipe using *Tiliqua* in the indigenous section). The back cover however shows the preparation of *Leiolepis*, a genus lizards of modest size, but there is no mention of that genus inside the book. But the author clearly specifies that there are many cookbooks and published recipes that he did not consult, especially from Asian, Australian, European, and South American sources.

Reading the text it is obvious that the author has a wide experience in herp cooking, and knows his subject very well. He provides useful tips for the best ways to cut meat and the most savory parts in turtles and crocodiles. Besides the cover photographs, the book contains a single figure (page 92), very schematic, showing Alligator meat cuts. Given the author's experience, one would have hoped to get such drawings for the other kinds of animals treated in the book, at least at the level of order.

Due to the general lack of information on the species used and the countries where they are used, the book provides a too limited an ethnoherpetological content to belong to a strictly herpetological library. It is, however, an excellent addition to any kitchen bookshelf. I recommend it not only for the numerous delicious recipes presented, but also for a number of other sakes. For instance, it should be shown to your neighbor, whose pet turtles are growing too big and who envisages releasing them in the wild. Or, it may be of special value if you live in an area where many herps are found dead on the road. Or it can help to creatively combat exotic invasive species, as the author himself suggests (the book contains nice recipes to cook *Bufo marinus*, *Rana catesbeiana*, etc.); this answers, in part, the publisher's worries regarding conservation. Many recipes, some of them very appetizing, are proposed for preparing rattlesnakes, which can in some aspects pose real safety issues. The book gives ideas for the use of alternative, cheaper, protein resources that are often neglected, even in periods of economic crisis. This book is, in general, an invitation to remind to the omnivorous species we are that there is more to eat than the few hormone-grown, warm-blooded animal species on sale at the corner supermarket.



Dermochelys coriacea (Leatherback Sea Turtle). Illustration by Jackson Shedd (www.jacksonshedd.com).