

A MOBILE TERRAPIN FARM.

HOW THE DIAMOND BACKS ARE RAISED AND SHIPPED—A BIG COLLECTION OF THEM.

From the Mobile (Ala.) Register, Jan. 30.

A few days ago an article clipped from a Washington paper appeared in the *Register*, giving a description of Senator Dennis's terrapin farm in Maryland. As we have something of the sort to boast of in the neighborhood of Mobile, it may not be amiss to give our readers a description of Mr. Mulford Dorlon's great terrapin farm at Cedar Point. This projection of land is on the western shore of Mobile Bay, about 30 miles below this city, and is inhabited principally by oystermen who reap golden harvests from the many beds which furnish nearly every oyster brought to the port of Mobile. Mr. Dorlon, who keeps a store at this point, has about three acres fenced in with strong pilings. Leading to this inclosure are two canals, one on the bay side and the other on the gulf side, which supply with salt water a number of ditches 10 feet wide and 100 feet long. The sand accumulating from the excavation of these ditches is thrown on each side, and used by the terrapins to sun themselves and lay their eggs in, which, if counted, would go up in the millions, and can be raked up by the bushel. In the winter season the terrapins remain imbedded in the mud of the ditches where they stay until Spring time, never touching a morsel of food. A system of sluices enables Mr. Dorlon to keep the ditches full of salt water, or drain them at pleasure, and he is not at all dependent on the tide for that purpose.

The number of terrapins on the farm, as far as can be ascertained and by the closest calculation, is between 20,000 and 25,000, and in the course of the next three or four years will be something hard to calculate. About May 1, Mr. Dorlon makes his purchase of terrapins from the country people on the Mississippi Sound, and takes all he can secure at \$3 a dozen, and that generally averages about 8,000 a year added to his farm, outside of those bred therein. The inhabitants of Mississippi and Alabama hunt the terrapins with dogs trained for that purpose. The dog barks when he finds one, and the hunter immediately secures it by going to the spot where the dog points.

The cost of feeding the terrapins, which, as we have said, is only done in the summer, is about \$1 per dozen for the season, and the price per dozen in New-York has varied from \$18 to \$8. The food, which consists of crabs and fish, is caught with a seine, in front of the farm, and really very little expense is attached to the raising of these valuable land tortoises. Mr. Dorlon begins to ship about Oct. 1, and then on to about May 10. He generally sends his to Savannah by rail, and thence to New-York by steamer, averaging about 12,000 a season; and, had it not been for a disastrous hurricane, which some time ago washed out Mr. Dorlon's farm, it would be to-day the greatest terrapin farm in the world. He can always ship all he can get, for there is a ready market for these delicacies.

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Alabama Tax Code circa 1975 with terrapin tax highlighted



§ 9-12-44

CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

§ 9-12-45

Conservation and Natural Resources and shall be taken only under the supervision of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources after written notice shall have been given the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources by the person, firm, corporation or association desiring to take such oysters. Any person, firm or corporation taking, catching or removing oysters for the purpose of replanting such oysters from any of the reefs, beds or bottoms in the waters of this state, shall replant such oysters in the waters of this state only. (Acts 1923, No. 504, p. 672; Code 1923, § 2769; Acts 1936-37, Ex. Sess., No. 169, p. 192; Code 1940, T. 8, § 139; Acts 1943, No. 422, p. 388, § 1; Acts 1945, No. 308, p. 501, § 1; Acts 1961, Ex. Sess., No. 108, p. 2028, § 1.)

CROSS REFERENCES

As to authority of Commissioner of Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to authorize dredging for seed oysters from a public reef, see notes to § 9-2-4.

RESEARCH REFERENCES

American Digest System:
Fish ◊7.

Corpus Juris Secundum:

C.J.S. Fish § 10.

§ 9-12-44. Tax on oysters harvested from private reefs for commercial purposes.

Owners of private reefs, beds or bottoms in this state must pay a tax of \$.06 per barrel on all oysters harvested from such private reefs, beds or bottoms for the purpose of resale. It is the intent and meaning of this section to collect the tax herein levied but once, at the time the oysters are harvested and placed on the market for commercial purposes. It is not the intent and meaning of this section to levy any tax when oysters are taken by any person, firm, corporation or association from any public reefs, beds or bottoms for the purpose of replanting the oysters so taken. Any tax levied by this section, having once been paid, shall not be collected again. (Acts 1923, No. 504, p. 672; Code 1923, § 2769; Acts 1936-37, Ex. Sess., No. 169, p. 192; Code 1940, T. 8, § 139; Acts 1943, No. 422, p. 388, § 1; Acts 1945, No. 308, p. 501, § 1; Acts 1961, Ex. Sess., No. 108, p. 2028, § 1.)

RESEARCH REFERENCES

American Digest System:
Fish ◊10.

Corpus Juris Secundum:

C.J.S. Fish § 36.

§ 9-12-45. Tax on terrapins caught, etc., for commercial purposes; minimum legal size; possession of undersized terrapins.

A tax of \$.05 is hereby laid on each turtle or terrapin packed, canned or caught for commercial purposes in this state or the waters within the territorial jurisdiction of this state. It shall be unlawful for any diamond back terrapin measuring less than six inches from the anterior to the posterior

From Washington Post dated Dec. 5, 1880

A TALK ABOUT TERRAPINS.
**HOW WASHINGTON'S FAVORITE DELICACY IS
OBTAINED AND STEWED.**

From the Washington Post.

“Stewed terrapin, Maryland style,” forms an important part of any Washington dinner laying claim to being a pretentious affair. A veteran caterer declares that the very finest terrapin on the American continent are caught in the Potomac River, just before it empties into the Chesapeake Bay, and at its mouth. They are more tender, he

From south region Culinary Arts Institute of Chicago cookbook circa 1947

Diamondback Terrapin Stew, Chesapeake Bay Style Recipe #283841

Turtle soup or stew is no longer a popular item on today's menus, but it once graced the tables of the rich and powerful. From the Southern chapter of the United States Regional Cookbook, Culinary Arts Institute of Chicago, 1947. Cooking time is approximate.

by Molly53

2½ hours | 20 min prep

SERVES 6 -8

3 large terrapins (turtles)
6 eggs, hard-cooked
3 tablespoons flour
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 tablespoons lemon juice (fresh is best)
1 tablespoon lemon rind, grated
1 onion, peeled and sliced
2 stalks celery, diced
1 tablespoon worcestershire sauce
1/2 cup cream
2 cups sherry wine
salt and pepper, to taste
3 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock
hot milk, if necessary