



## Alabama Outdoor Classroom Box Turtle Research Program

### Instructions for Determining Gender

Use these instructions to safely gather and record the data for your “Box Turtle Gender Data Form” in your *Box Turtle Research Folder* and in your online “*Identification Info & Gender Data*” for each turtle.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

Placing your turtle on its back can be dangerous due to the location of its lungs under its shell.

If you must flip the turtle over for any data collection, move quickly and safely.

You risk injuring the turtle if you leave it on its back for longer than one minute at a time.

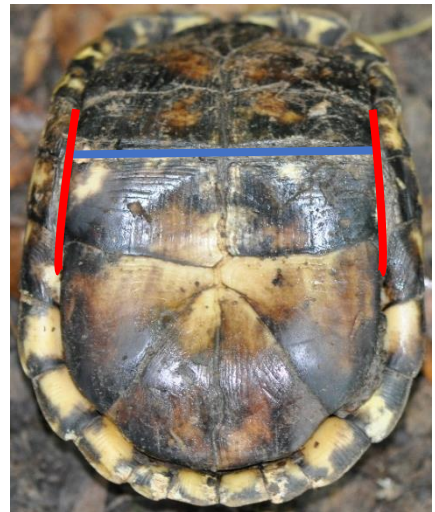
#### For reference:



The **carapace** (left) is the top of the shell.



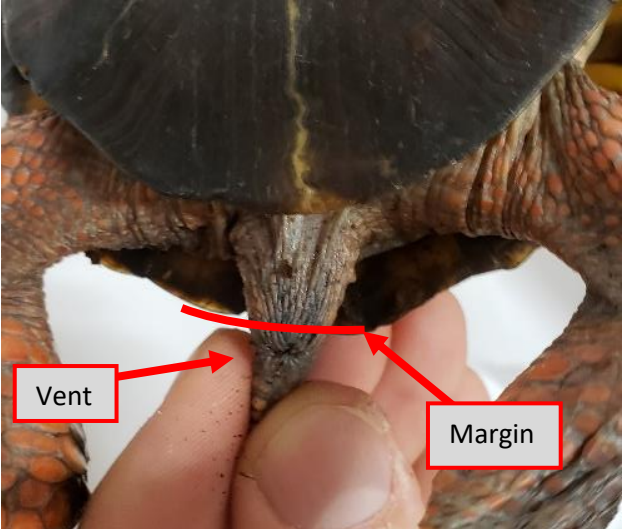
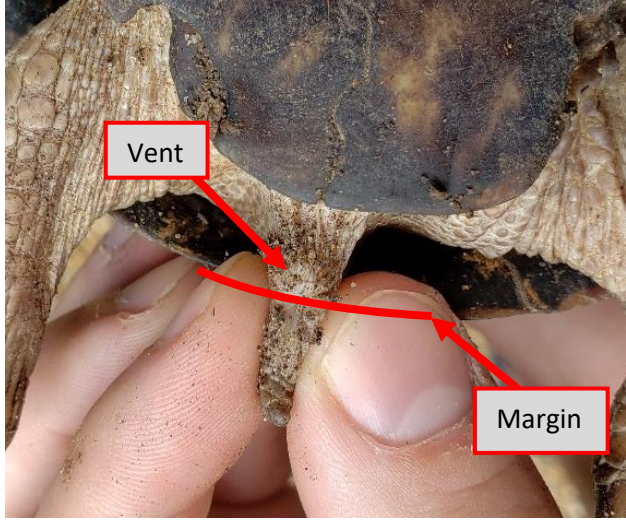
The **plastron** (right) is the bottom of the shell. Note that the plastron begins and ends within the margins of the carapace (marked with red lines).

The box turtle’s characteristic **hinge** is found on the plastron (right, marked with blue line).






## Determining the gender of your turtle:

It can be difficult to determine whether your turtle is male or female. Use a combination of the following observable traits to confidently determine the gender of your turtle.

Male's Plastron	Female's Plastron
<p>Concave indention in rear lobe of plastron</p> 	<p>Flat or very slight concave plastron</p> 
Male's Vent	Female's Vent
<p>Vent located past the margin of the carapace; and thicker based, longer tail</p> 	<p>Vent located under carapace margin; and shorter, thinner tail</p> 
<p><b>What is a Vent?</b> The "vent" is where the cloaca opens.            The cloaca is the only hole for the digestive, reproductive, and urinary tracts.  <i>Tip: The tail should be naturally extended. Do not pull on the tail, simply hold it out straight.</i></p>	
<p><i>Gender traits continued on next page</i></p>	

## Determining the gender of your turtle:

It can be difficult to determine whether your turtle is male or female. Use a combination of the following observable traits to confidently determine the gender of your turtle.

<b>Male's Eyes</b>	<b>Female's Eyes</b>
<p data-bbox="293 489 659 525">Typically orange or red eyes</p> 	<p data-bbox="998 489 1273 525">Typically brown eyes</p> 
<b>Male's Feet</b>	<b>Female's Feet</b>
<p data-bbox="293 1010 659 1077">Thicker, sharper, longer, and more curved hind claws</p> 	<p data-bbox="919 1024 1354 1060">Shorter and straighter hind claws</p> 