**PLEISTOCENE FOSSIL TURTLES (TESTUDINOIDEA, CRYPTODIRA)**

**FROM THE TALARA TAR SEEPS, PERU**

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As a contribution to a better understanding of the paleobiodiversity of Peru at the end of the last ice age, we recently revised the Pleistocene fossil turtles discovered in the asphalt deposits of the Talara Tar Seeps, taphonomically similar to the famous site of Rancho La Brea (Los Angeles, California). Most of this material was collected in 1958 by an expedition from the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada, and remained housed in its collections. We measured and photographed all the specimens and compared them with skeletons of extant taxa to validate their anatomical and taxonomic identification. The specimens are mostly fragmentary plates of the carapaces and plastra of turtles belonging to two families of the superfamily Testudinoidea within the order Cryptodira. The family Geoemydidae is the most abundant, represented by the genus *Rhinoclemmys* (indeterminate species). Less abundant fossil remains belong to the genus *Chelonoidis* (indeterminate species) within the family Testudinidae. The occurrence of these fossils shows that the Pleistocene ecosystems of the Peruvian northern coast supported abundant aquatic and terrestrial turtles (tortoises) in areas where they are completely absent today. This suggests that the restriction of their geographical distribution occurred due to environmental changes in the region, possibly related with the development of the climatic conditions known today as El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO).

**Keywords:** Testudines, Geoemydidae, Testudinidae, Pleistocene, Paleobiodiversity.

Funding for this project was obtained from the M.A. Fritz Travel Grants for the Advancement of Studies in Palaeontology of the Royal Ontario Museum and the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation, Germany.