Of the Manner of taking Turtle.

The inhabitants of the Bahamas-Islands by often Practice are very dexterous in catching them, particularly the green Turtle. In April they go in little Boats to the Coasts of Cuba, and other neighbouring Islands, where in the Evening, especially in Moon-light Nights they watch the going and returning of the Turtle, to and from their Nets, at which Time they turn them on their Backs, where they leave them, and proceed on turning all they meet, for they cannot get on their Feet again when once turned. Some are so large that it requires three Men to turn one of them. The Way by which Turtle are most commonly taken at the Bahamas-Islands is by fixing them with a small Iron Peg of two Inches long, this Peg is put in a Socket at the End of a Staff 10 Feet long. Two Men usually set out for this Work in a little light Boat or Canoe, one to row and gently steer the Boat, while the other stands at the Head of it with his Striker. The Turtle are sometimes diversified by their swimming, with their Head and Back out of the Water, but they are oftentimes discover’d lying at the Bottom, a Fathom or more deep. If the Turtle perceives he is discover’d, he starts up to make his Escape, the Men in the Boat pursuing him, endeavour to keep Sight of him, which they often lose and recover again by the Turtle putting his Nose out of the Water to breathe; thus they pursue him, one paddling or rowing, while the other stands ready with his Striker; it is sometimes half an Hour before he is tired; then he folks at once to the Bottom, which gives him an Opportunity of fixing him, which is by piercing the Shell of the Turtle through with the Iron Peg, which slips out of the Socket, but is fastened by a String to the Pole. If he is spent and tired by being long pursu’d, he tamely submits when thruck to be taken into the Boat or hauled a-Shoar. There are Men, who by diving will get on their Backs, and by pressing down their Hind-part, and raising the Fore-part of them by Force, bring them to the Top of the Water, while another slips a Noose about their Necks.

TESTUDO

The Hawks-bill Turtle.

This Kind of Turtle receives its Name from the Form of its Mouth, resembling that of an Hawk’s beak; the upper Jaw hanging more over the under Jaw than in the other Kinds. As the green Turtle is most valued for the Food it affords, this is next in Esteem for the usefulness of its Shell, so well known in Mechanick Uses. The Strength and Beauty of the Shell is sufficient to distinguish it from the other Kinds of Turtle, besides, their Head and Neck extended is longer than in other, the Hind-part of the Shell is narrower, and scalloped with creased Nodens; the Fore Legs are longer than in any of the other Kinds. These Turtle are said to feed most on a Seas Fungus, by the inhabitants called Pascu-tons.

Caretta. Rochefort.

La Tortué Carret. Rochefort, Ibid.

CETTE espèce de Tortué prend son nom d’Aglioche de la forme de sa bouche, qui ressemble au bec d’un Faucon, la mâchoire supérieure avançant plus sur l’inferieure que dans les autres espèces. Comme la Tortue verte est la plus estimée a cause de la beauté de sa chair, elle a le second rang, à cause de l’utilité de son écaille, qui est employée comme on fait à plusieurs usages mécaniques: Le fers et la branc de cette écaille sert pour la dégluage des autres espèces de Tortué, autre que sa tête & fin où sont plus longs lorsqu’il sert éculés que ceux des autres, le derrière de l’écaille est plus étroit & dense en quelque sorte, et devenant four plus longue que celles d’aucuns des autres espèces. On dit que ces Tortues se nourrissent principalement d’un Fungus marin que les habitants appellent Oseille de Jule.