Notes for Digitized Galapagos Tortoise Whaling Data from 1831-1868 Spreadsheet

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The authors made several standardizations and decisions when digitizing Townsend’s (1925) Galapagos tortoise data. These include:

1) The historic Island name listed in Townsend is corrected for spelling. For ease of interpretation, in three instances, rarely used historic Island names are updated to their more commonly cited forms: Porter=Indefatigable, Crossman=Albemarle and Cowley=Albemarle.

2) Modern Island names were added to the spreadsheet by the authors.

3) The day(s) are transcribed exactly as written in Townsend, as are the number of people/boats and the time spent collecting (includes trips to and from the island). Notes are the authors contribution to Townsend’s text and often indicate if/when exact tortoise counts were estimated or rounded.

4) When Townsend quotes a whaling logbook that describes a range of tortoises captured, we consistently selected the lower range value. For example, in 1839 the Robert Edwards reported capturing “10 to 12” tortoises. We transcribed this value as 10.

5) Finally, there are several cases where values are interpreted based on our own understanding of the portion of the whaling logbook recorded by Townsend (1925). These cases are described below:

a. Abigail 1834: Townsend (1925:106) reports a total of 140 tortoises collected from Indefatigable Island based on the quote from May 22, “the Boats Returned with 40 live terpin…we got here 140 Terepin and 10 Boats Load of wood [sic]”. However, the entire Abigail logbook describes capturing “21”, “31”, “40” and “40”, tortoises on May 16, 17, 19 and 22, respectively, for a total of 132 tortoises. We transcribe this value as 132, not 140.

b. Moss 1834: Townsend (1925: 106-107) reports capturing “8 terrapin” from Charles Island on February 16 and “6 terrapin” on February 17. Then, the Moss sailed to Chatham Island and collected another “8 terrapin”, before sailing back to Charles Island to capture “150 terrapin” on February 24, and finally, “finished giting terrapin–got on board the No of 350 [sic],” as reported on March 1. We accept this description to indicate a total of eight tortoises captured from Chatham Island, and a total of 350 tortoises collected from Charles Island.

c. Chili 1841: Townsend (1925: 113) reports that on September 22, “daylight sent in the boat 11 A M 2 boats came from Albemarle with 10”. We record this number as ten total tortoises (instead of ten per boat).

d. Hector 1841: Townsend (1925: 114) summarizes a total of 24 tortoises collected at Albemarle Island. However, published whale logbooks only record 16. On June 8, “At dark the boats returned with some half dozen Terrapins”, and again on November 2, “at 9 P M the boats returned with 10 Terrapin.” We record this total as 16 tortoises.

e. Frances 1844: This record is within the published description of the bark Equator (Townsend 1925: 117).
f. *Aurora* 1847: Townsend (1925: 120) reports that the *Aurora* collected “30” tortoises from Chatham Island on March 28, “36” on March 29 and “got under way” with “100” tortoises on March 31. Therefore, we assume and record that between March 30-31, an additional 34 tortoises were collected from Chatham Island to make an even 100 captured.
g. *Congaree* 1849: Townsend (1925: 123) similarly reports for the *Congaree* that “98” tortoises were collected from Chatham Island on July 26, “8” on July 27 and “7” on July 28, but that the vessel departed with “130” tortoises that same day. Therefore, we assume and record that sometime on July 28 an additional 17 tortoises were collected.
h. *Susan* 1850: Townsend (1925: 123) reports that on June 24 the *Susan* captured 14 tortoises from Chatham Island, but on June 30 when the vessel departed, they had “all together 156 terrapin”. This implies that between June 25-30th, the *Susan* collected 142 tortoises, which is what we assume and record.
i. *Peru* 1853: Townsend (1925: 125) similarly reports for the *Peru* that “5” and then “9” tortoises were captured from Albemarle Island on July 9, but when the vessel departed on July 18, the whaling ship captured “about 150”. Therefore, we assume and record that between July 10-18th, the *Peru* captured an additional 139 tortoises.
j. *Lancer* 1859: Townsend (1925: 128) reports 70 tortoises captured from Chatham Island by the *Lancer*. However, the vessel only reports “twenty” captured on May 25, “8” on May 26, “14” on May 27 and “17 large ones and 3 small ones”…“and 5 that were to large we killed and brought down there meat [sic]” on May 28. The whale logbook reports “65” in addition to the five butchered tortoises on May 28, which is likely why Townsend assumed 70 tortoises collected. However, given the detailed counts per day, we record a total of 67 tortoises collected (including the five butchered) for this vessel.
k. *Morning Star* 1861: Townsend (1925: 130) reports that on July 10 the *Morning Star* had “all three Boats came on Board each one brought 20 Turpin [sic]” and by July 11 the vessel had “188 alltold [sic]”. Therefore, on July 11 we assume and record that the *Morning Star* collected 128 tortoises.
l. *Edward Carey* 1862: Townsend (1925: 131) reports that on November 17, the *Edward Carey* captured “five” tortoises, and on November 20, the crew “returned with eleven terrapin and reported seventy more on the beach,” for a total of 86 tortoises over two days. However, on November 21, the whaleship departed with “about 90” tortoises in all. We assume that this number is rounded from 86, the true total.
m. *Edward Carey* 1863: Townsend (1925: 131) reports that on December 28, “a small schooner Anchored close to us the Capt went on board and bought of them 78 Terripan…Also rec’d a Boat load of Terripan from the Islands [sic]”. It is impossible to know if these 78 tortoises are from Duncan Island or elsewhere in the Galapagos. By January 1 the *Edward Carey* reported collecting an additional “130” tortoises over the past week for a total of 208 tortoises.

References:
Townsend, Charles Haskins