

PETAURUS AUSTRALIS.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Dentes varii in variis.

Corpus cute volatili cinctum.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS.

PETAURUS supra nigricans, subtus albicans,
pollicibus plantarum rotundatis.

Arbitrentur fortasse Physici debere Petaurum Australem genus potius per se constituere, quam inter novas species numerari. Cum vero generum institutio ob hanc vel illam peculiarem notam, pedum nempe seu dentium formam, scientiam naturalem sæpe perturbet et obscuret, molestiamque potius quam auxilium tyroni afferat; satius duxi Petaurum Australem velut speciem Sciuri volantis describere. Sciurosque ipsos volantes ab aliis disjungere, et in genere distincto nomine Petauri reponere. Quamvis enim a LINNÆO in eodem genere cum Sciuris aliis numerentur, fatendum tamen est, membranam, seu cutim extensam, cujus ope volitant, adeo esse singularem et propriam, ut non immerito ad genus separatum possint pertinere.

Hoc tamen fortasse nonnullis videatur curiose potius quam utiliter factum.

Totius igitur generis Petauri, species hic depicta non tantum maxima est, sed et elegantissima. Species

præterea est nova, de Nova Hollandia non ita pridem petita. Magnitudine cuniculo juniori vix cedit.

Color corporis superni est fusco-cinereo-nigricans, inferioris fere albidus. Pilus est præter modum mollis et elegans; cujus si copia sufficeret, nescio annon aliorum animalium vellera, utcunque pretiosa, fordescerent. Pedum posticorum forma singularis est: Pollex seu digitus primus rotundatus est, ungue complanato et rotundato; cum aliis omnibus digitis ungues acuminati sint. Digiiti quoque duo intermedii, seu pollici proximi, cute communi ad ipsos ungues conjunguntur. Cauda longa pilo mollissimo et delicatulo densissime vestitur.

In narratione itineris australis a Domino WHITE, hoc animal nomine *Hepoona Roo* distinguitur, et pulcherrime a Domino CATTON depingitur: figuram igitur ibi datam, utpote eximiam, in hoc nostro opere imitamur.



THE
SOUTHERN PETAURUS.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Teeth differing in the different species.

Body surrounded by a flying-skin.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER, &c.

PETAURUS blackish above, whitish below,
with the thumbs of the hind-feet rounded.

HEPOONA ROO.

White's Voyage to Botany Bay.

It may perhaps be doubted whether this animal might not constitute a genus per se, rather than be regarded as a species merely : but as the institution of genera from two or three particular circumstances only ; *e. g.* a peculiarity in the teeth, claws, &c. frequently throws much confusion on natural history, and rather tends to embarrass than instruct a student in the science, I have thought it best to describe this animal as a species of flying-squirrel, and to separate the flying-squirrels from the genus *Sciurus*, with which LINNÆUS had conjoined them, and to form them into a genus by the name of *Petaurus*.

This perhaps may be thought an unnecessary piece of exactness ; yet there is something so peculiar in the expanded processes of skin by which the flying-squir-

rels are distinguished, that they may properly enough be allowed to form a distinct genus.

Of all the species then of this genus the animal here figured is the largest and the most elegant : it is also a new species ; having been brought from New Holland during the late voyages.

Its color is a very fine fable or deep grey-brown above, while the lower surface is nearly white. The fur is of the most exquisite softness and elegance, and if the animal could be procured in sufficient plenty, would bid fair to supersede the richest furs hitherto in use. The structure of the hind foot in this species is remarkable ; the thumb or first toe being of a rounded form and furnished with a flattened nail, while the remaining toes have sharp claws ; and the two second toes, or those next the thumb, are united in one common covering or skin to the very claws : the tail is long, and is very thickly cloathed with fur of the softest and most delicate appearance.

In Mr. White's Journal of a voyage to New South Wales, this animal is distinguished by the title of *Hepoona Roo*, and is beautifully figured by Mr. CATTON ; which figure, on account of its excellency, we have not scrupled to copy in the present work.



Shaw, George. 1791. "The Southern Petaurus, *Petaurus australis* [Pl. 60]." *The Naturalist's Miscellany* 2(XX), <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.310711>.

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