



Black Squirrel.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

IN WHICH IS CONTAINED A FULL AND COMPLETE HISTORY OF HIS REIGN, FROM HIS FIRST COMING TO THE CROWN, UNTIL HIS DEATH, WITH A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE GREAT CIVIL WAR, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PARLIAMENTS.

BY

JOHN BURNET, A BISHOP OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND ONE OF THE SEVENTEEN MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT IN 1640.

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Two Shillings. This History is divided into three Parts. The first Part contains the History of the King's Person, and the State of the Church and Nation, from his first coming to the Crown, until the year 1628. The second Part contains the History of the King's Person, and the State of the Church and Nation, from the year 1628, until the year 1642. The third Part contains the History of the King's Person, and the State of the Church and Nation, from the year 1642, until his death.

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SCIURUS NIGER.—LINN.

BLACK SQUIRREL.

PLATE XXXIV.—MALE AND FEMALE.

S. corpore S. migratorio longiore; vellere molli nitidoque, auribus, naso et omni corporis parte nigerrimis, cirris albis dispersis.

CHARACTERS.

A little larger than the Northern gray squirrel; fur, soft and glossy; ears, nose, and all the body, black; a few white tufts of hair interspersed.

SYNONYMES.

SCIURUS NIGER, Godman, Nat. Hist., vol. ii., p. 133.

“ “ Bachman, Proceedings Zool. Society, 1838, p. 96.

“ “ Dekay, Nat. Hist. of New-York, part i., p. 60.

DESCRIPTION.

Head, a little shorter and more arched than that of the Northern gray squirrel, (in the latter species, however, it is often found that differences exist, in the shape of the head, in different individuals.) Incisors, compressed, strong, and of a deep orange colour anteriorly; ears, elliptical, and slightly rounded at the tip, thickly clothed with fur on both surfaces, the fur on the outer surface extending three lines beyond the margin; there are however no distinct tufts; whiskers, a little longer than the head; tail, long, not very distichous, thickly clothed with moderately coarse hair; the fur is softer than that of the Northern gray squirrel.

COLOUR.

The whole of the upper and lower surfaces, and the tail, glossy jet black; at the roots the hairs are a little lighter. Specimens procured in summer do not differ materially in colour from those obtained in winter, except that before the hairs drop out late in spring, they are not so intensely black. In all we have had an opportunity of examining,

there are small tufts of white hairs irregularly disposed on the under surface, resembling those on the body of the mink. There are also a few scattered white hairs on the back and tail.

DIMENSIONS.

						Inches.	Lines.
Length of head and body	-	-	-	-	-	13	0
“ tail (vertebræ)	-	-	-	-	-	9	1
“ tail, including fur	-	-	-	-	-	13	0
Palm, to end of middle fore-claw	-	-	-	-	-	1	7
Length of heel to the point of middle claw	-	-	-	-	-	2	7
“ fur on the back	-	-	-	-	-	0	7
Breadth of tail with hair extended	-	-	-	-	-	5	0

HABITS.

An opportunity was afforded us, many years since, of observing the habits of this species, in the northern part of the State of New-York. A seat under the shadow of a rock near a stream of water, was for several successive summers our favourite resort for retirement and reading. In the immediate vicinity were several large trees, in which were a number of holes, from which at almost every hour of the day were seen issuing this species of Black Squirrel. There seemed to be a dozen of them; they were all of the same glossy black colour, and although the Northern gray squirrel and its black variety were not rare in that neighbourhood, during a period of five or six years we never discovered any other than the present species in that locality; and after the lapse of twenty years, a specimen (from which our description was in part drawn up) was procured in that identical spot, and sent to us.

This species possesses all the sprightliness of the Northern gray squirrel, evidently preferring valleys and swamps to drier and more elevated situations. We observed that one of their favourite trees, to which they retreated on hearing the slightest noise, was a large white-pine (*Pinus strobus*) in the immediate vicinity. We were surprised at sometimes seeing a red squirrel, (*Sciurus Hudsonius*), which had also given a preference to this tree, pursuing a Black Squirrel, threatening and scolding it vociferously, till the latter was obliged to make its retreat. When the Squirrels approached the stream, which ran within a few feet of our seat, they often stopped to drink, when, instead of lapping the water like the dog and cat, they protruded their mouths a considerable distance into the stream, and drank greedily; they would afterwards sit upright, supported by the tarsus, and with tail erect, busy themselves for a quar-

ter of an hour in wiping their faces with their paws, the latter being also occasionally dipped in the water. Their barking and other habits did not seem to differ from those of the northern gray squirrel.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

Many of our specimens of the Black Squirrel were procured through the kindness of friends, in the counties of Rensselaer and Queens, New York. We have seen this species on the borders of Lake Champlain, at Ogdensburg, and on the eastern shores of Lake Erie; also near Niagara, on the Canada side. The individual described by Dr. RICHARDSON, and which may be clearly referred to this species, was obtained by Captain BAYFIELD, at Fort William on Lake Superior. Black Squirrels exist through all our western forests, and to the northward of our great lakes; but whether they are of this species, or the black variety of the gray squirrel, we have not had the means of deciding. It is a well ascertained fact that the Black Squirrel disappears before the Northern gray squirrel. Whether the colour renders it a more conspicuous mark for the sportsman, or whether the two species are naturally hostile, we are unable to decide. It is stated by close observers that in some neighbourhoods where the Black Squirrel formerly abounded, the Northern gray squirrel now exclusively occupies its place.

GENERAL REMARKS.

We have admitted this as a true species, not so much in accordance with our own positive convictions, as in deference to the opinions of our naturalists, and from the consideration that if it be no more than a variety, it has by time and succession been rendered a permanent race. The only certain mode of deciding whether this is a true species or merely a variety, would be to ascertain whether male and female Black Squirrels and gray squirrels associate and breed together in a state of nature. When a male and a female, however different in size and colour, unite in a wild state and their progeny is prolific, we are warranted in pronouncing them of the same species. When on the contrary, there is no such result, we are compelled to come to an opposite conclusion.

We had great doubts for many years whether this species might not eventually prove another of the many varieties of the Northern gray squirrel, (*S. migratorius*.) Although these doubts have not been altogether removed by our recent investigations, they were considerably lessened on ascertaining the uniformity in size, shape, colour, and habits of all the

individuals we have seen in a living state, as well as all the prepared specimens we have examined.

Much difficulty has existed among authors in deciding on the species to which the name of *S. niger* should be appropriated. The original description by LINNÆUS was contained in the single word "*niger*." If he had made no reference to any author, his description would have served quite well, as this was the only species of squirrel purely black, that was known at that day. He however made a reference to CATESBY, who figured the black variety of the Southern fox-squirrel, (*S. capistratus*), and BRISSON, PENNANT, ERXLEBEN, and SCHREBER referred the species in the same manner to the description and figure of CATESBY. Our American writers on natural history, as well as Dr. RICHARDSON, have however adopted the name given by LINNÆUS, and applied it to this species. We consider it advisable to retain the name, omitting the reference to CATESBY.

It is difficult to decide, from the descriptions of Drs. HARLAN and GODMAN, whether they described from specimens of the black variety of the northern gray squirrel or from the present species.

Dr. RICHARDSON has, under the head of *Sciurus niger*, (see Fauna Boreali Americana, p. 191,) described a specimen from Lake Superior, which we conceive to be the black variety of the gray squirrel; but at the close of the same article (p. 192) he described another specimen from Fort William, which answers to the description of this species.



Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Sciurus Niger, Black Squirrel [Pl. XXXIV, male and female]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 1, 261–264.
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