



Phrynosoma Douglassii.

PHRYNOSOMA DOUGLASSII.—*Bell*.*Plate XIV.*

CHARACTERS. Head short, triangular, pointed and covered with tubercles, and not spines, on the posterior part, nostrils open at the anterior extremity of the superciliary ridge; body elongated, rounded, flattened, covered above with scales and slightly elevated and pointed tubercles, below with smooth scales; femoral pores, eighteen on each thigh.

SYNONYMES. *Agama Douglassii*, *Bell*, Linn. Trans., vol. xvi. p. 105, tab. x. pl. 105.

Phrynosoma Douglassii, *Wagler*, Natürlich. Syst. der Amphib., p. 146.

Phrynosoma Douglassii, *Wiegmann*, Herp. Mex., pars i. p. 54.

Agama Douglassii, *Harlan*, Med. and Phys. Res., p. 141.

DESCRIPTION. The head is short, triangular, flattened above, with its frontal, vertical, as well as occipital regions covered with closely imbricated polygonal scales; two slightly elevated tubercles only are seen on the latter region. The rostral plate is very small and triangular; the nasal plates are single on each side, very thin, and surrounded by five or six small scales. The nostrils are lateral, situated at the anterior extremity of the superciliary ridge, and are directed upwards and a little outwards. The superciliary ridge projects horizontally over the eye, more so than in any other *Phrynosoma*, and is covered with six large superior orbital plates, and terminates posteriorly in a small tubercle, very slightly pointed. The eye is small, sunken and black; the eyelids are equally movable, and covered with minute scales. There are ten superior labial plates, quadrilateral, and all nearly of the same size; the inferior labial plates are seven in number, quadrilateral, and larger than in any of the genus. Behind these labial

plates, and on the same plane, are four tubercles, slightly flattened and pointed, the posterior largest. The inferior and external border of the lower jaw presents a series of tubercles, those in front smaller and smooth, swelling only a little in the centre, so as to give a festooned appearance; while those under the angle of the mouth are larger, and slightly elevated into a pointed tubercle. Between this series of tubercles and the labial plates, are interposed four or five rows of small scales. The chin is covered with small, smooth, rhomboidal scales, of equal size.

There are nine small tubercles, which surround the posterior and superior part of the head, extending from the point of one meatus of the ear to the other. These tubercles are disposed as in the *Phrynosoma cornuta*, yet are so slightly developed as not to deserve the name of spines, for none of them exceed two lines in length, and the central tubercle is so small as hardly to be distinguished; thus the posterior part of the head loses that spiny appearance so remarkable in the *Phrynosoma cornuta* and *Phrynosoma coronata*. The entrance to the external meatus of the ear is sub-triangular, large above, smaller below.

The neck is short, contracted at the back of the head, and covered above with small scales, and small, slightly elevated pointed trihedral tubercles. The scales of the throat are smooth and very small; the skin presents a transverse fold, which terminates on the side of the neck, over a deep depression in front of the anterior extremities, and here the margins of the fold are furnished with small pointed spines.

The body is short, flattened above, rounded or arched outwards at the flanks, and is protected by small scales, interspersed with trihedral pointed tubercles, less elevated than in the three other species, and arranged in four irregular rows on each side of the vertebral line, and surrounded at their bases by smaller tubercles of similar form. The vertebral line differs here also from the *Phrynosoma cornuta* and *Phrynosoma orbiculare* in having several tubercles interposed in the five or six rows of scales that cover it. The flanks are furnished with only a

single row of spines, that give the serrated margin. The thorax and abdomen are covered with smooth rhomboidal scales.

The tail is broad, thick and flat at its root, but soon becomes small, and terminates in a point; above it is covered with scales and small tubercles, the points of which are slightly elevated; similar points are scattered along the lateral margin of the tail, but by no means form that beautiful serrated edge seen in the *Phrynosoma coronata*.

The abdomen is covered with large, smooth, rhomboidal scales, elongated posteriorly. The vent is transverse, with small scales both before and behind.

The anterior extremities are large, covered above with rhomboidal carinated scales, and with a row of points along the front of the fore-arm; below, the scales are smooth and small; there are five fingers, distinct, and each furnished with a short, delicate, curved nail. The posterior extremities are but slightly larger, and are covered like the anterior, with the exception of a few spines scattered about the thighs and legs. There are eighteen femoral pores, well developed.

COLOUR. The head is brown above, as well as the tubercles; the chin is silver-white, with a few dusky circular spots. The superior surface of the neck and trunk is light grey, with dusky spots and bands, and with a broad vertebral band of yellowish-white; on each side of this vertebral line at the neck is an oblong dark chestnut blotch, reaching to the shoulders; the throat is silver-white. The trunk is marked with dark blotches, placed transversely, but none of them unite at the vertebral line. The thorax and abdomen are silver-white, with minute dusky spots. The tail is coloured like the back, but is more completely banded towards the tip; the inferior surface is silver-grey. The anterior extremities, as well as the posterior, are grey above and silver-white below.

DIMENSIONS. Length of head, 8 lines; of body, from head to vent, 2 inches 8

lines; of tail, beyond the vent, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches; of thigh, 7 lines; of leg, 7 lines; of tarsus and toes, 7 lines; total length, 4 inches 10 lines.

HABITS. Mr. Bell* says, on the authority of Mr. David Douglas, who observed it in its wild state, that, "like most others of its tribe, it is very nimble during the summer months, and it is then difficult to capture it; but in April, when it first makes its appearance, or in October, before it retires to its winter habitation, being at both seasons weakly, it is easily taken. At such seasons the traveller is constantly annoyed by them during the night, seeking shelter from the cold under his blanket, and is frequently under the necessity of removing these little intruders on his rest. It takes up its abode in the holes made by a species of *Lepus*, *Arctomys*, (*Arctomys Richardsonii*,) which are alternately occupied by them and several species of *Coluber*, which resort there for the purpose of preying on these *Agamæ*, (*Phrynosomæ*,) and on the marmots."

He further states, on the same authority, its food to be coleopterous insects and vegetable substances, as the *Purschia*, *Artemisia*, &c.; but Mr. Nuttall, an accurate naturalist, informs me that he has frequently observed these animals, during a residence of many months in the country about the Oregon river, and that their only food is insects.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. The *Phrynosoma Douglassii* is abundant in the sandy plains south of the river Oregon, and chooses for its residence the banks of streams that are covered with the *Purschia tridentata*, *Artemisia*, *Salvia*, &c.

GENERAL REMARKS. Mr. T. Bell gave the first description of this animal in the Transactions of the Linnæan Society of London, and accompanied it with a tolerable figure, in which the short knobs about the head, instead of long spines, as in the other *Phrynosomæ*, are well represented. The individual from which

* Trans. Linn. Soc. Lond., vol. xvi. p. 106.

Mr. Bell took his description and figure was brought from the Oregon or Columbia river by Mr. David Douglas, whose name he has given to the species.

Dumeril and Bibron* have greatly erred in supposing this to be the young of the *Phrynosoma orbicularis*, which they probably inferred from the size of Bell's figure. That it is an adult animal, and perfectly distinct from all others of the genus, I have not the least doubt, as I have seen a specimen, the one from which the accompanying plate was taken, brought alive to Philadelphia from the banks of the Oregon, that equalled in size any *Phrynosoma cornuta* or *orbicularis* that I have ever seen, and yet having no spines about the head.

* Hist. Nat. des Rept., tom. iv. p. 314.

FAMILY. LACERTINIDA. *Dumeril et Bibron.*

CHARACTERS.

1. The head is a quadrangular pyramid, the apex in front, and covered above with polygonal, symmetrical, horny plates.
2. The tympanum is distinct, and though sometimes depressed, is often level with the skin. The eyes have commonly three movable lids.
3. The mouth is extensive, with the labial plates large. The tongue is free, fleshy, flattened, thin, more or less extensible, with its base sometimes lodged in a sheath, and its apex always notched or bifid; above it is covered with scaly-like papillæ, which may be either rounded or angular.
4. The maxillary teeth vary in form and in length, and are implanted on the internal border of a common groove, hollowed on the most prominent portion of the maxillary bones. The palatine teeth are variable, and in some wanting altogether.
5. The body is round, greatly elongated, without a crest, and is protected by scales of variable size. The neck is without a dewlap or sac, though commonly marked with several transverse folds. The abdomen is covered with square or rounded plates, always larger than those on the back.

6. The tail is conical and very long, in some specimens being three or four times the length of the body, and covered with verticillated scales.
7. The extremities are well developed, and are always four in number; the anterior have five fingers, the posterior five toes, all armed with nails.



Holbrook, John Edwards. 1842. "Phrynosome douglassii – Bell." *North American herpetology; or, A description of the reptiles inhabiting the United States* 2, 101–108. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.326785>.

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