

NOTE ON THE OCCURRENCE OF AN ARMADILLO OF THE GENUS *XENURUS* IN HONDURAS.

By FREDERICK W. TRUE,

Curator of the Department of Mammals.

ABOUT four years ago the National Museum received from Chamelicon, Honduras, with other mammals, an armadillo of the genus *Xenurus*. This is the first instance, so far as I am aware, in which any representative of this genus has been found in Central America. The species is presumably the *X. hispidus* of Burmeister, but to this I will refer again presently.

The specimen (No. 19464, U.S.N.M.) is a female, and was obtained at Chamelicon, Honduras, January 8, 1891. Mr. Wittkugel, the collector, states that the native name of the species is "Tumbo." He gives the following dimensions:

Total length, 1 foot 5 inches; tail, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; hind foot, 4 inches.¹ The skin, from which the skull was extracted, has been mounted, and I have measured it, with the following result: Total length, along curves, 510 mm.; head and body, 362 mm.; head, 73.5 mm.; tail, 150 mm.; ear from crown, 27 mm.; hind foot and claw, 66.5 mm.; longest claw of fore foot (straight), 38.5 mm.

As but few specimens of the smaller *Xenuri* have been examined, I will describe this individual (Plate X) somewhat in detail. The head is short and blunt, and the extremity of the snout entirely naked for a distance of 16 mm. The cephalic shield consists of about 38 comparatively large plates. There are two short rows of plates in front of the scapular shield, of which the first contains 6 plates and the second 8 plates. The scapular shield consists of 8 antero-posterior rows of plates, including an anterior, narrow, marginal row, and the posterior row which resembles a thoracic ring. These rings are 11 in number, each with from 28 to 31 plates. The pelvic shield has 10 antero-posterior rows of plates.

The plates of the scapular and pelvic shields are large and quadrate, with rounded edges; those of the thoracic rings are rectangular, with

¹This is probably a measurement of the hind leg. The foot with claw measures $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches.

straight edges. The marginal plates are smaller than the others and rounded. Between each pair of plates on the thoracic rings one hair only is exserted.

The ears are margined with a row of small rounded scales, but otherwise are entirely naked. The feet and outer sides of the legs are covered with somewhat scattered, flat, orbicular scales. The tail has similar flat scales, about 1.5 mm. in diameter, embedded in the skin at regular intervals. From the posterior margin of each scale one hair is exserted. The terminal portion of the tail for about 40 mm. is entirely naked on the upper side.

On the belly the hairs are in tufts, which are arranged in regular transverse rows. There are about twenty of these rows between the insertion of the fore and hind legs.

The relative size and length of the claws is the same as in the large species, *X. uncinatus*.

The skull (Plate XI) indicates that the individual is rather young. The nasals are narrowest in the middle, and expanded at the anterior end and also behind. Their posterior terminations are oblique, the frontal extending forward in an angle between them. The frontal itself is greatly swollen and the interorbital constriction is pronounced. The supraoccipital is flat. The posterior half of the jugal is much broader than in *X. uncinatus*, and its lower margin turns up sharply to meet the squamosal, making nearly a right angle with the anterior half. The basioccipital is narrow between the tympanic bullæ. The palate is short, its length behind the tooth row in the median line not more than that of the last two dental alveolæ and half of the third, while in *X. uncinatus* it extends backward a distance greater than the length of the last four dental alveolæ.

The lower border of the mandible is not concave posteriorly. The coronoid process is small, but well formed and somewhat curved. The condyle is concave.

Dental formula, $\frac{9}{7}$.

Dimensions of the skull.

Measurements.	³⁵³⁸² 19464, female.	Measurements.	³⁵³⁸² 19464, female.
	mm.		mm.
Length from upper margin of foramen magnum to end of nasals . . .	80	Breadth of nasals at anterior extremity	10.5
Greatest zygomatic breadth	41	Breadth of nasals at posterior extremity	9.5
Mastoid breadth	38	Length of palate	46
Length of nasals in median line	23	Length of tooth row	28
Interorbital constriction	26	Length from last tooth to end of pterygoid	14

I have little hesitancy in referring this Honduras specimen to the *Dasypus* [*Xenurus*] *hispidus* of Burmeister,¹ although his types came from Lagoa Santa, Brazil. It agrees thoroughly both in size and in details of structure, except that the nasal bones appear to be somewhat

¹ Syst. Übersicht Thiere Brasil., 1. Theil, 1854, p. 287.

different in shape. There is considerable variation in this latter feature in other armadillos.

In 1873 Gray published figures of two skulls similar to that of the Honduras specimen.¹ For one of these he established the species *Xenurus latirostris*, and for the other a new genus, *Ziphila*, with *Z. lugubris* as a new species.

Judging from the figures alone (for the descriptions are to some extent self-contradictory), the skulls represent closely allied, if not the same, species. The figures are presumably of natural size, though it is not so stated. If such is the case, the skull of *Z. lugubris* is somewhat larger than the Honduras specimen, but practically identical in form. The former differs in that it has a somewhat thicker muzzle and less elevated frontal sinus. In the skull of *X. latirostris* the muzzle is shorter and broader still, and the frontal sinus is also still less elevated.

In view of the large amount of individual and age variation which the armadillos present, it is perhaps reasonable to suppose that the skulls of both *X. latirostris* and *Ziphila lugubris*, together with that of the Honduras specimen, are specifically identical with *X. hispidus*. It is not possible to demonstrate this, however, with the material now available, and the present paper is intended rather as a contribution toward the solution of that question. Its prime object is to record the presence of the genus *Xenurus* in Central America.

¹ Hand-list of Edentates, 1873, pp. 22, 23, pl. 7, figs. 1-4.



True, Frederick W. 1896. "Note on the occurrence of an armadillo of the genus *Xenurus* in Honduras." *Proceedings of the United States National Museum* 18(1069), 345–347. <https://doi.org/10.5479/si.00963801.18-1069.345>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/32799>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5479/si.00963801.18-1069.345>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/5713>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.