

XLV.—*Descriptions of Two new Rodents from the Victoria Nyanza.* By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

By the kindness of Canon Tristram I have had the opportunity of examining some small mammals obtained at Nassa, on the Speke Gulf of the Victoria Nyanza, by Mr. F. C. Smith, of the Church Missionary Society. These prove to consist of three species—a mungoose (*Helogale undulata* *, Peters), a dormouse, and a hare, the two latter being new to science.

Myoxus (Eliomys) Smithii, sp. n.

Size very small. General colour above uniform pale ashy grey, without darker markings of any kind. Head like back; no dark rings round eyes or patches between eyes and ears. Cheeks, sides, and under surface white, but the hairs here, as on the back, slaty grey basally. Hands and feet pure white. Tail thick and bushy, apparently intermediate in form between those of *M. crassicaudatus* and *murinus*; but, owing to the manner in which the tail of the type has been prepared, an exact description of its form and proportions is not practicable. Tail-hairs dull rufous brown with white tips.

Ears extremely small, smaller apparently than in any other dormouse, naked, flesh-coloured. Hind feet short and broad, their soles with six pads, whose positions appear to be much as in *M. murinus*.

Skull broad, short, and rounded; muzzle very short, but, owing to the anterior part of the nasals being slightly damaged in the type, it is difficult to give exact dimensions; in any case, however, the muzzle is decidedly shorter and broader than in the allied species; anterior palatine foramina rather shorter than the combined upper molar series. Upper branch of the anterior zygoma-root further forward than the lower, agreeing in this respect with *M. murinus* and differing from *M. crassicaudatus*.

Dimensions of the typical skin:—

Head and body 86 millim.; tail without hairs (approximate) 49, with end hairs 73; hind foot without claws 16·5.

Skull: back of bulla to front face of incisors 21; greatest breadth 13·6; nasals, length (c.) 7·3, greatest breadth 3·2;

* Three specimens of *Helogale* were killed at one shot, thus confirming Emin's observation (P. Z. S. 1890, p. 444) that this mungoose hunts in packs like some of the smaller Mustelidæ.

interorbital breadth 3·8; breadth of brain-case 12; height of anteorbital foramen 2·2; palate, length 9·5; diastema 5·1; length of upper molar series 3·1.

Hab. Nassa, Speke Gulf, S. Victoria Nyanza. Coll. F. C. Smith, Esq.

This beautiful little dormouse differs from *M. murinus*, *M. microtis*, and *M. Kelleni* by its much paler colour, smaller ears, and by the entire absence of black orbital rings, while from *M. crassicaudatus* it is distinguished by its longer tail and more rounded skull. From all of them it is also distinguished by its much shorter muzzle and proportionally broader nasals. It is unfortunate that the skinning of the tail has so distorted it that one cannot say whether in form it most resembles that of *M. crassicaudatus* or *M. murinus*; but I trust that spirit-specimens may soon be obtained to enable this and other points to be cleared up.

On the whole I suspect that *M. Smithii* will prove to be most nearly allied to the Angolan *M. Kelleni* described in Dr. Reuvens's admirable monograph of the group; but without seeing a specimen of that form it is difficult to appreciate the exact relationship of the two to one another.

Lepus victoriæ, sp. n.

Size and general proportions, length of ears, feet, and tail as in *L. capensis*.

Colour of back intermediate in tone between the fulvous suffused *L. capensis* and the pallid hares characteristic of the more desert regions of North Africa. The longer hairs ringed with black and pale cream-colour, not fulvous. Sides of muzzle, patches in front of and behind eyes, and chin white. Forehead grizzled black and cream-colour, a frontal white spot present. Ears with the anterior halves of their backs smoky grey, their extreme apical margins black, their anterior edges cream-coloured and their posterior white. Back of neck pale rufous. Underfur of back pale smoky grey basally, black terminally. On the sides of the body the grey of the back passes gradually into the pure white of the belly without any rufous line marking the transition. The outer sides of the forearms, the back of the hands, and an indistinct line passing down the front of the hind limb from the hips on to the feet pale fulvous, very different from the deep rufous of these parts in *L. capensis*. Tail long, deep black along the top, pure white on the sides, below, and at the tip.

Dimensions of the type (skin) :—

Head and body 460 millim.; tail 73; hind foot without claws 102; ear 105, from notch 87.

Hab. Nassa, Speke Gulf, S. Victoria Nyanza. Coll. F. C. Smith, Esq.

This hare seems to be a pallid form of the *L.-capensis* group, approximating in its general colour to *L. tigrensis* and some of the other northern species, but differing from these latter by its shorter ears, which are of only about the same length as in *L. capensis*. The hare of Mount Kilima-njaro, of which the Museum owes a specimen to Messrs. Rowland Ward and Co., appears to be so closely allied in colour and proportions to the typical *L. capensis* that I agree with Mr. True* that it should be referred to that species.

Heuglin's *Lepus microtis*†, from the Bahr-el-Gazal, in 7° N., 30° E., is clearly founded on so young a specimen that it will probably never be satisfactorily determinable; but, whatever it may prove to be, its more rufous colouring and shorter ears appear to separate it from *L. victoriæ*.

XLVI.—On some of the Larger Species of *Geomys*.

By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

OWING to the impression prevailing until quite recently that the species of *Geomys* might be easily and satisfactorily determined merely by the characters presented by the grooves on their incisor teeth, their skulls have been but little attended to by authors in general, while, so far as the British Museum material is concerned, the skins examined by Mr. Alston during the preparation of the 'Biologia Centrali-Americana' have had their skulls left in them until now.

It is therefore not surprising that, on extracting a series of skulls, the specimens referred to *G. hispidus* prove to belong to two perfectly distinct species, a large and a small; and the same appears to be the case with those referred to *G. mexicanus*.

Of the *G. hispidus* group, with harsh hair, one species has roughly a skull length (basal) of almost 70 millim., while the smaller has this same dimension at most only about 56 or 58 millim. To this latter species there belong the original *G. hispidus* of Le Conte, as shown by Baird's description of the type, and also Peters's *G. heterodus*, of which Dr. Matschie has kindly sent me the typical measurements. Finally the two original specimens of Gray's "*Saccophorus quachil*" prove

* Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. xv. p. 468 (1892).

† N. Act. Akad. Leopold. 1865, p. 32.



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