

January 25, 1842.

William Horton Lloyd, Esq., in the Chair.

A letter from the Society's Corresponding Member, Alexander N. Shaw, Esq., of the H. C. Civil Service, was read, in which that gentleman calls attention to the advantages which would ensue from the appointment of agents at different ports, for the transmission of animals for the Society, and requests to be informed what animals would be most acceptable from the part of India in which he is at present stationed, observing that he will endeavour to procure them, and should he succeed, will forward them free of expense to Bombay.

Mr. W. D. Cooper communicated to the Meeting some notes, by T. S. Thomson, Esq., relating to the habits of the *Bassaris astuta* of Lichtenstein. These notes are confirmatory of the observations of Mr. Charlesworth, made at a former meeting of the Society\*. The animal, Mr. Thomson has been informed, is found in most parts of the republic of Mexico, but is not known beyond the habitations of man. Besides fowls, butchers' meat, &c., it will eat bread, fruit, and sugar; it breeds principally in outhouses, and particularly in neglected spots, producing three or four at a birth. Sometimes it is tamed, and used like the domestic cat to destroy rats, mice, &c.

Mr. Gould exhibited several Australian Mammals, from his own collection, which he considered to be new to science. The first to which he drew attention was a species of the genus *Macropus*, as now restricted, which, from the sooty black colouring of the face, he proposed to describe under the name

**MACROPUS MELANOPS.** *Macr. vellere molli obscure griseo; dorso, collo, plagæque magnæ ad basin femoris, fuliginoso-lavatis; lateribus corporis indistinctè fulvo tinctis; capite fuliginoso; rhinario nigro; auribus intus pilis albis vestitis, extus pilis albis, nigro irroratis, ad basin nigris; gula pectoreque albescentibus; tibiis tarsisque fusco-albis, digitis nigris; cauda robusta, supra fuliginoso-fusca, subtus pallidior, dimidiâ apicali nigra.*

	unc.	lin.
Longitudo ab apice rostri ad caudæ basin. . .	33	0
———— caudæ . . . . .	20	6
———— tarsi digitorumque . . . . .	11	9
———— ab apice rostri ad basin auris . . . .	5	9
———— auris . . . . .	3	9

\* Proceedings for July 13, 1841, p. 60.

The most striking character in this species is the general deep hue of the fur of the upper parts of the body and neck ; the colour may be described as sooty grey, but having moreover a brownish tint ; the whole upper surface and sides of the head are nearly black ; on the sides of the body and outer side of the hind legs, at the base, a very faint fulvous tint is observable ; a large space on the haunch is of the same deep hue as the back ; the throat and chest are whitish, the visible portion of the hairs on these parts being white ; at the base, or next the skin, they are of a deep grey colour, and so are those on the abdomen ; but here, though the hairs are tipped with white, the grey tint shows itself to a greater degree. The ears are thickly clothed with long white hairs on the inner side ; externally they are pencilled with black and white, in about equal proportions, but at the base they are clothed with the same dense fur as that of the head, and this is black. The fore legs, like the outer surface of the ears, are pencilled with black and white, the black becoming more conspicuous towards the toes, which are covered with black hairs. The hind legs and tarsi are chiefly of a brown-white hue, but on the toes there is a considerable admixture of black ; the hairs which cover the nails and the sides of the toes are almost entirely black. The tail is of the same colour as the body at the base, and has the apex black ; the portion covered with black hairs is rather less than that clothed with the paler fur.

The following new Australian Mammals were also characterized by Mr. Gould :—

**BELIDEA ARIEL.** *Bel. pallidè cinerea, lined dorsali, a basi rostri ferè usque ad basin caudæ extensâ, circulo interrupto ad basin auris, membrandque laterali suprâ nigrescentibus, hac ad latera flavescenti-albâ ; corpore subtùs pallidè flavo ; caudâ gracili ad apicem nigrâ ; auribus mediocribus ; pedibus pallidis.*

	unc.	lin.
Longitudo ab apice rostri ad caudæ basin. . .	6	0
———— caudæ . . . . .	7	0
———— auris . . . . .	0	8
———— ab apice rostri ad basin auris . . .	1	3½

Two specimens of this species of Flying Phalanger were received by Mr. Gould from Port Essington. In size and proportions it approaches most nearly to the *Belidea breviceps*, being considerably less than the *Petaurus sciureus* of authors ; but it is readily distinguished by its general pale colouring, and more especially by the pale yellow tint of the under parts of the body. The tail is slender as in *B. breviceps*, Waterh. ; the fore and hind feet are of a pale yellowish hue in one specimen ; in the other the fore feet have a pale brownish tint : a narrow black mark, commencing between the eyes, runs along the back, and extends nearly to the root of the tail ; a narrow blackish line surrounds the eyes, and a black ring encircles the base of the ears, but is interrupted under the ear, which is sparingly clothed with minute hairs, excepting at the base externally, where they are covered with

fur like that on the head, and which is of a black colour, forming a portion of the dark ring before mentioned ; and on the hinder margin of the ear, at the base, is a fringe of pale yellowish hairs. The upper surface of the head is of a paler hue than the upper parts of the body, which are of a pale ash colour, slightly tinted with yellowish ; the upper surface of the lateral membrane is blackish, and so is the anterior portion of the forearm and region of the wrist ; a dusky tint is also observable on the posterior part of the hind leg.

**MUS PENICILLATUS.** *Mus griseo-fuscus, vellere ferè ut in M. decumano ; corpore subtùs pedibusque albis flavo lavatis ; auribus mediocribus, posticè subemarginatis ; caudà corpore capiteque paulo longiore, gracili, dimidià apicali pilis longis nigris vestitd.*

	unc.	lin.
Longitudo ab apice rostri ad caudæ basin. . . .	7	3
———— caudæ . . . . .	7	9
———— ab apice rostri ad basin auris . . . .	1	5½
———— tarsi digitorumque . . . . .	1	8
———— auris . . . . .	0	7½

*Hab.* Port Essington.

This species of Rat is rather less than the *Mus decumanus* ; in the character of its fur it nearly resembles that animal, but the hairs are rather more adpressed ; the colouring of the upper parts of the body also nearly resembles that of *M. decumanus* ; there is, however, a rusty tint in the region of the occiput and on the back of the neck. Around the angle of the mouth, the chin, throat, and all the under parts of the body, as well as the feet and inner side of the legs, are white, with a faint yellow tint, which might be described as cream-colour ; and the hairs on these parts are of a uniform colour to the roots, excepting on the chest, where they are grey next the skin. The tail is long and slender, sparingly clothed at the base with minute bristly hairs, as in most species of the genus ; but about the middle of the tail the hairs assume a black colour, and are longer, and towards the apex they soon attain a considerable length, measuring at and near the tip half an inch or more. The ears are narrower than usual, somewhat pointed, and slightly emarginated behind ; they are sparingly clothed with minute hairs.

**MUS HIRSUTUS.** *Mus vellere hirsuto, corpore suprà fuscescente pilis nigris crebrè commixtis, subtùs fulvescens, fusco rufoque tincto ; auribus mediocribus ; caudà longà pilis nigris, aliquanto longis, vestitd ; dimidià apicali pilis longioribus, his ad apicem caudæ rufescentibus.*

Of this large and curious Rat, Mr. Gould regretted that he did not possess a perfect skin ; the somewhat mutilated skin which he exhibited, together with a perfect skeleton, however, displayed characters very distinct from other species of *Mus*. Compared with the known species of that genus, he observed it approached most nearly to the *Mus giganteus* of Hardwicke ; it is equal in size to that animal, and has the same coarse shaggy fur, but is readily distinguished by its well-clothed tail, the hairs on this part being much longer than

usual in the genus, especially on the apical half, where the scales are hidden by them; those at the point of the tail measure upwards of an inch in length, and at the distance of two inches from the point they average about an inch in length; on this part they have a rusty hue, but on the remaining portions they are black. On the upper parts of the body the shorter hairs are of a yellowish brown colour, but the longer interspersed hairs being numerous, and of a black colour, give a deep general tint to these parts. The under parts of the body are of a rusty yellow colour, tinted with brownish on the neck and chest, and having a more decided rust-colour on the abdomen.

The skull approaches that of *Mus giganteus* in general form, but is rather narrower and longer; the palatal portion is broader, and the incisive foramina are shorter, terminating posteriorly, about one-eighth of an inch anterior to the foremost molars; whilst in *M. giganteus* these foramina terminate in a line with the front molars, or rather behind that line; the nasal bones are longer and rather narrower, and the occipital portion of the cranium is decidedly smaller. The principal dimensions, taken from the skeleton, are as follow:—

	in. lin.
Length from tip of nasal bones to end of sacral vertebræ . .	10 4
Length of tail . . . . .	13 0
Length of tarsus and claws . . . . .	2 8½
Length of skull . . . . .	2 6½
Width of ditto . . . . .	1 3¾
Length of nasal bones . . . . .	1 0½
Distance between incisors and molars of the upper jaw . . .	0 9½
Width between molars . . . . .	0 3½
Length of incisive foramina . . . . .	0 5
Width of occiput . . . . .	0 8

**MUS DELICATULUS.** *Mus suprà pallidè fusco-flavus; corpore ad latera flavescente, subtus albo; caudâ mediocri suprà fuscâ, subtus ad basin albescenti; auribus parvulis; pedibus gracilibus, albis.*

	unc. lin.
Longitudo ab apice rostri ad caudæ basin . . .	2 5
———— caudæ . . . . .	2 2
———— tarsi digitorumque . . . . .	0 8
———— ab apice rostri ad basin auris . . . .	0 8
———— auris . . . . .	0 3¾

In colouring the present species greatly resembles the *Mus sylvaticus* of Europe, but it is a trifle paler; its size is less than that of the common mouse (*Mus musculus*, Auct.). The fur is soft and short; that on the upper parts of the body is of a pale yellow-brown colour. The sides of the body are of a delicate yellow tint, and the lower parts of the sides of the muzzle, the chin, throat, and whole under parts, as well as the feet, are pure white; along the mesial line of the abdomen and on the throat the hairs are of a uniform colour to the base. The feet are slender, and the ears are rather

small. The tail is slender, and nearly equal in length to the head and body.

Two specimens exhibiting the above characters were exhibited by Mr. Gould.

The reading of Prof. Owen's memoir on the Myology of the Apteryx was commenced.