

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

LEPUS BAILEYI, A NEW COTTONTAIL RABBIT FROM
WYOMING.

BY C. HART MERRIAM.

In the summer and early autumn of 1893 my assistant, Mr. Vernon Bailey, and I made a biological reconnaissance of the middle part of the State of Wyoming, which we traversed from west to east. On entering the Wind River Basin a short distance south of the town of Lander, the first mammal to attract my attention was a large, pale Cottontail with ears even longer than those of the Arizona Jack Cottontail (*Lepus arizonæ* Allen). The species was new to me, but I became well acquainted with it during the remainder of the season, for throughout our course in the Wind River and Bighorn Basins one or more were seen every day, and not having been disturbed by man they were very tame, often permitting us to pass within 20 feet (7 meters) without taking alarm. When started they usually ran only a short distance and squatted behind a sage brush or greasewood bush, or in the burrow of a prairie dog or badger, with their long ears laid back on the neck. By rushing suddenly toward them several were driven into these burrows. They were most active at dusk, when their large white tails could be seen flashing in various directions. When at rest the tails are lowered and apparently narrowed, so that the gray of the upper surface conceals the white, but the instant the animal starts the tail is raised and bent up on the rump. When partly erected it seems to curve to the left, but when fully up and pressed against the rump it was found to curve to the right (convexity to the left) in seven cases out of eight. In all of these respects it resembles the tail of the

white-tailed ground squirrel of the southern deserts (*Ammospermophilus leucurus*).

The new Cottontail, which I take pleasure in naming *Lepus baileyi*, after my companion, Mr. Vernon Bailey, is a northern representative of the *arizonæ* series, with which it agrees in the large size of the ears and audital bullæ. It inhabits the Upper Sonoran and Transition Zones and ranges completely across the lower parts of the Owl Creek Mts., which mountains separate the Wind River Basin from the Bighorn Basin. On the north the species follows the Bighorn Basin into Montana, and on the east it was last killed by us on Crazy Woman Creek, a tributary of Powder River in northeastern Wyoming. Southeast of Powder River it was afterward obtained at Douglas by Mr. J. Alden Loring. In the Wind River Basin we found it in company with the short-eared Cottontail (*Lepus nuttalli*), though the latter seemed to be closely confined to the willow thickets along the streams, while the long-eared species was found everywhere over the sage and sarcobatus plains and on the open deserts.

***Lepus baileyi* sp. nov.** Wyoming Cottontail.

Type from Spring Creek, east side Bighorn Basin, Wyoming. No. 56016, ♀ ad., U. S. Nat. Mus., Biol. Survey Coll. Collected Sept. 17, 1893, by C. Hart Merriam and Vernon Bailey. Original No. 4372.

General characters.—Size large; coloration pale; ears and tail very long. Similar in general appearance to *L. nuttalli*, but paler, with much longer ears and tail.

Color.—Upper parts pale pinkish buff, sparingly lined with black hairs; nuchal patch pale fulvous; rump narrowly grayish, lined with black hairs; ears like back, but terminal fourth bordered by black; outer sides of fore and hind legs pale fulvous; fore and hind feet white or whitish, with basal fur on outer side of feet more or less suffused with pale fulvous; pectoral collar (broad and full) and tuft on each side of inguinal region pale buffy fulvous; under parts white; tail white, except a grayish band on dorsal surface.

Cranial characters.—Skull similar to that of *L. arizonæ*, but larger and heavier, with decidedly larger teeth. Contrasted with *L. nuttalli* of the same region, the skull as a whole is larger; the audital bullæ very much larger; the postorbital processes larger, broader, and more produced anteriorly.

Measurements.—Type specimen: total length, 418; tail vertebræ, 50; hind foot, 100; ear from base, 94. Average of 8 specimens from the Wind River and Bighorn Basins: total length, 404; tail vertebræ, 55; hind foot, 96.



Merriam, C. Hart. 1897. "Lepus baileyi, a new cottontail rabbit from Wyoming." *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 11, 147–148.

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