

## SOREX CAROLINENSIS.—BACH.

CAROLINA SHREW. MALES AND FEMALES.

## PLATE LXXV.

*S. carolinensis*, corpore griseo — cinerascens; cauda brevis, depressa.

## CHARACTERS.

*Carolina Shrew, with a short flat tail; ears not visible; body of a nearly uniform iron grey colour.*

## DESCRIPTION.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Intermediary incisors} \text{ ————— } \frac{2}{2} \\ \text{Lateral incisors } \frac{5-5}{2-2}; \text{ Molars, } \frac{5-5}{3-3} = 34. \end{array}$$

The four front teeth are yellowish white, with their points deeply tinged with chesnut brown; all the rest are brown, a little lighter near the sockets. The upper intermediary incisors have each, as is the case in most other species of this genus, an obtuse lobe, which gives them the appearance of having a small tooth growing out from near the roots. The three lateral incisors are largest; the posterior ones very small; the first and fifth grinders are the smallest; the other three nearly equal. In the lower jaw the two first teeth are lobed; the lateral incisors are comparatively large, and crowded near the grinders. The molars are bristled with sharp points except the last, which is a tuberculous tooth.

The muzzle is moderately long and slender, and pointed with a naked deep lobed lip. The whiskers are composed of hairs apparently all white, a few of those situated in front of the eyes extending to the occiput, the rest rather short. There are no visible ears, even where the fur is removed; the auditory opening is an orifice situated far back on the sides of the head running obliquely. The orifice of the eye is so small that it can only be discovered by the aid of a good magnifying glass. The tail is flat, thickly covered with a coat of close hair, and terminated by a small pencil of hairs. The fore feet are rather broad for this genus, measuring a line and a half in breadth, resembling in some respects those of the shrew mole, (*Scalops canadensis*.) The toes are five, the inner a little shorter than the



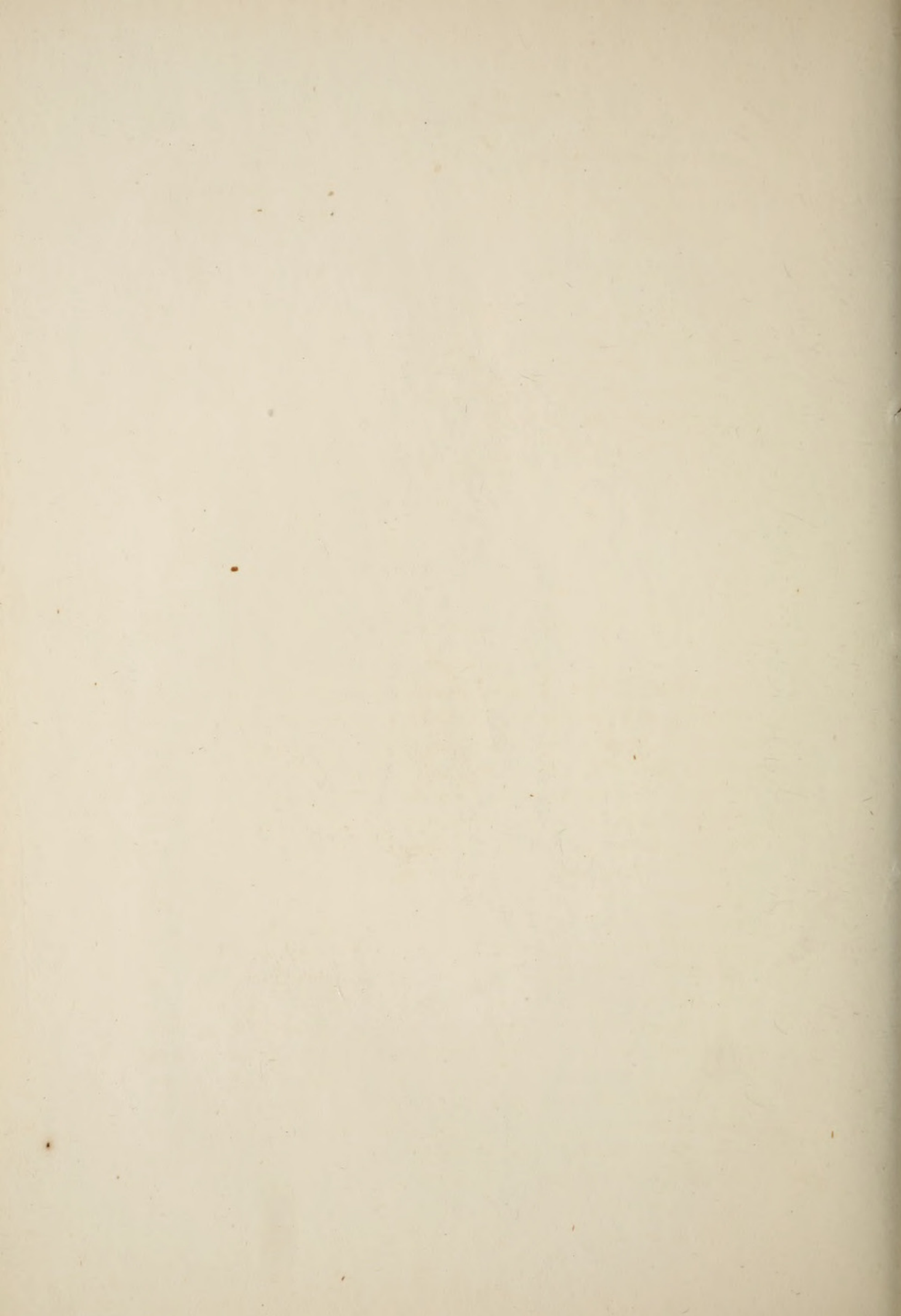


On Stone by W<sup>m</sup> E. Hitchcock

*Carolina Shrew*

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon, F. R. S. L. S.

Lith. Printed & Col<sup>d</sup> by J. T. Bowen, Phil.





outer one; the third and fourth nearly equal. The nails are sharp, rather long, a little arched, but not hooked. The hind feet are more slender than the fore ones; naked beneath, and covered above, as are also the fore feet, by a thin coat of short adpressed hairs.

## COLOUR.

The fur presents the beautiful velvety appearance common to most species of this genus. The colour of the whole body is nearly uniform, considerably lustrous on the upper surface, and in most lights dark iron gray, rather darker about the head; on the under surface the fur is of nearly the same general appearance, but is a shade lighter.

## DIMENSIONS.

|   | INCHES.        |
|---|----------------|
| Length of body . . . . .                | 3              |
| “ of tail . . . . .                     | $\frac{5}{8}$  |
| “ of head . . . . .                     | 1              |
| “ of palm to the end of nails . . . . . | $\frac{5}{16}$ |
| “ of hind feet . . . . .                | $\frac{1}{2}$  |

## HABITS.

It is difficult to know much of the habits of the little quadrupeds composing this genus. Living beneath the surface of the earth, feeding principally on worms and the larvæ of insects, shunning the light, and restricted to a little world of their own, best suited to their habits and enjoyments, they almost present a barrier to the prying curiosity of man. They are occasionally turned up by the plough on the plantations of the south, when they utter a faint, squeaking cry, like young mice, and make awkward and scrambling attempts to escape, trying to conceal themselves in any tuft of grass, or under the first clod of earth that may present itself. On two occasions, their small but compact nests were brought to us. They were composed of fibres of roots and withered blades of various kinds of grasses. They had been ploughed up from about a foot beneath the surface of the earth, and contained in one nest five, and in the other six young. In digging ditches, and ploughing in moderately high grounds, small holes are frequently seen running in all directions, in a line nearly parallel with the surface, and extending to a great distance, evidently made by this species. We observed on the sides of one of these galleries, a small cavity containing a hoard of coleopterous insects, principally composed of a rare species (*Scarabæus tityus*), fully the size of the animal itself; some of them were nearly consumed, and the rest mutilated, although still living.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

This quadruped is found in various localities, both in the upper and maritime districts of South Carolina. We recently received specimens from our friend Dr. BARRETT, of Abbeville District; and we have been informed by Dr. PICKERING, to whose inspection we submitted a specimen, and who pronounced it undoubtedly an undescribed species, that it had been observed as far north as Philadelphia.



Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Sorex carolinensis, Carolina Shrew [Pl. LXXV, males and females]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 2, 176–178. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322566>.

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