

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

January 8th, 1839.

Professor Owen in the Chair.

Dr. Harlan read a paper entitled, "Description of a new species of *Meriones* inhabiting the United States of North America."

"A male and female specimen of the species which it is now proposed to add to the Fauna of the United States, were taken some time during 1836, on the farm of Mr. Beck, in Philadelphia County, a few miles north-east of the city. The female at the moment of her capture carried several young, which adhered to the teats firmly, notwithstanding the violent efforts and leaps of the parent.

"In the descriptive details which follow, the usual allowance must be made when such are drawn from impaled skins."

MERIONES MICROCEPHALUS. *Mer. supernè nigro flavoque mixtis, flavo apud latera prævalente ornatus; corpore subtùs albescente, flavido lavato; auribus mediocribus, pilis flavis et nigris intermixtis, intùs atque extùs instructis.*

"Male. Length of the body, three inches; of the tail, four inches; total length of the hind leg, one inch four-eighths; of the thigh, three-eighths; of the leg, five eighths; of the foot, four-eighths. Five toes behind; four before; with a rudimentary nailed thumb; all the toes sparsely hairy, and terminating in strong, sharp claws.

"Colour above, plumbeous, interspersed with reddish fawn; below, white, similarly interspersed in a less degree, a lateral longitudinal band of reddish fawn colour separating the sides from the abdomen; tail, sparsely hairy, dark coloured above, white beneath, with a pencil of hairs at the extremity; this member being proportionably longer, and the head much smaller and more elongated than in *G. Canadensis*. The last-named species has been figured by the late Professor B. T. Barton, in the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, also in the Encyclopédie Méthodique, but was for the first time adequately described from living specimens in the 'Fauna Americana,' p. 156, when specimens were deposited in the cabinet of the Academy of Natural Science of Philadelphia.

"The subjects of the present memoir were placed in my hands for description by Mr. Chaloner, a Member of the Academy. The female is larger than the male, and of purer white beneath."

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The specimens of *Gerbillus microcephalus* above referred to, were presented by Dr. Harlan to the Society; and also a species of *Spermophilus*, which Dr. Harlan exhibited to the Meeting. The last-mentioned animal very closely resembles the *S. Franklinii*; but being of a much smaller size, Dr. Harlan was anxious that it should be submitted to examination, and should be carefully compared with that animal upon some future occasion.

Several specimens of the Bean Goose (*Anser segetum*), the Gray-Lag Goose (*Anser cinereus*), the White-fronted Goose, (*Anser albifrons*), and of another species allied to these, were exhibited by Mr. A. D. Bartlett, in order to illustrate a paper which he communicated to the Meeting, "On a new British species of the genus *Anser*, with remarks on the nearly-allied species."

"It may be necessary, before describing the new species," says Mr. Bartlett, "to notice the three birds most nearly allied, in order more clearly to point out the distinctions existing between them; I do this in consequence of the imperfect descriptions given by authors, from which it is almost impossible to distinguish the species. I shall commence with that which is the most common.

"*Anser segetum*, Meyer. Bean Goose. Entire length, 33 inches; extent, 64; from the carpal joint to the end of wing, 19 inches. The head and neck are brown, tinged with grey: back and scapulars, darker brown, slightly tinged with grey, each feather being margined with greyish white; primaries, dark brown, tinged with grey; shoulders of wings and secondary quill-feathers, greyish brown; rump, blackish brown; upper tail-coverts, white; tail, dark brown, deeply edged with greyish white; breast and belly, dirty white; abdomen and under tail-coverts, pure white; bill, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, rather slender, flattened and narrow towards the tip; the base, sides and nail, black; immediately above the nail commences a yellowish orange mark, extending a little beyond the anterior margin of the nostrils in front, and passing under and beyond the termination of them at the sides, but seldom reaching the corner of the mouth, except in very old individuals, in which this mark extends under and behind the nostrils, crosses the base of the bill next the forehead, leaving only the central part of the bill (between the nostrils) and the nail black; which latter part is sometimes, though rarely, white; legs and feet, reddish orange; wings, when closed, reaching 2 inches beyond the tail. The young of this species are darker, and the markings less distinct; the bill is shorter, the mark upon it narrower, and of a deep red colour; the legs and feet, pale orange.

"*Anser cinereus*, Meyer. Grey Lag Goose. Entire length, 35 inches; extent, 64; from the carpal joint to end of wing, $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The plumage more cinereous than in the last-described species; the shoulders and rump, light grey; breast and belly, white, sometimes spotted with black; the bill, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long; more robust, deeper, broader, and the laminae much more developed than in the Bean Goose, and of a dull yellow, inclining to flesh colour towards the nail, which is white; in summer the bill assumes a redder tint; legs

and feet, pale flesh colour; wings, when closed, even with the end of the tail. The young of this species are darker than the adults, but the grey upon the shoulders and rump, the form of the bill, and colour of the legs and feet, will always distinguish them from the young of any of the other species.

“*Anser albifrons*, Bechstein. White-fronted Goose. Entire length, 26 inches; extent, 52; from the carpal joint to end of wing, $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The adult of this species may be distinguished from others of the genus by the conspicuous white mark upon the forehead and sides of the bill, and the irregular patches of black and white upon the breast and belly; the bill, $1\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch long, of a reddish flesh colour; the nail, white; legs and feet, bright orange; wings, when closed, reaching $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch beyond the tail. The young of this species are much darker than the adult; the forehead and sides of the bill, nearly black; the breast and belly, dirty white, spotted with brown; bill, brown, inclining to flesh colour; nail, dark brown; legs and feet, pale orange.

“*Anser phænicopus*, Bartlett. Pink-footed Goose. Entire length, 28 inches; extent, 60; from carpal joint to end of wing, $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Top of the head and back of the neck, dark brown; sides of the face, forepart of the neck, and upper part of the breast, light brown; back and scapulars, dark brown, tinged with grey; each feather deeply margined with greyish white; shoulders of wings and rump, greyish ash; primaries, brown, tinged with grey; tail, brownish ash, deeply edged with white; lower part of belly, upper and under tail-coverts, pure white; legs and feet, of a reddish flesh colour or pink; the hind toe closely united by the membrane that runs along the edge of the inner toe; the feet, remarkably thick and fleshy; bill, $1\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch, long, narrow, and much contracted towards the tip; the base, sides and nail, black; the space between the nail and the nostrils, reddish flesh colour or pink; wings, when closed, reaching $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch beyond the tail.

“Having thus noticed the three nearly-allied species, and described the new one, I will endeavour to point out more particularly the distinctions between this new species and the Bean Goose, to which it bears the nearest resemblance. First, the great difference in the size; the average size of the Bean Goose is 33 inches in length, and 64 inches in extent; while the average size of the new species is 28 inches in length, and 60 inches in extent. Secondly, the bill is much smaller, shorter, more contracted towards the tip, and of a different colour. Thirdly, the difference in colour and in form of the legs and feet, and in the fleshy character of the foot, and the hind toe being more closely united by its membrane, has consequently, less freedom of motion. Fourthly, the plumage on the rump and shoulders being more inclined to grey. And lastly, in the form of the sternum, which differs from that of the Bean Goose in shape and bears a more close resemblance to that of the White-fronted Goose. In conclusion, I may remark that I have examined, in all, twelve specimens of this new species, four of which were alive; one of them is now living in the garden of the Zoological Society, where

it has been, I am told, eight years, without exhibiting any perceptible alteration in its plumage, or in the colour of its legs and feet.

“The Grey Lag Goose is by far the most rare of the four species here referred to.”

Professor Owen commenced the reading of a paper, “On the Classification and Affinities of the Marsupial Animals.”



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