



DASYURUS MACULATUS.

Spotted-tailed Dasyurus.

The Spotted Martin, Phillip's Voy. to Bot. Bay, p. 276.—Martin, Cat., pl. 46.

Viverra maculata, Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. i. pt. ii. p. 433.

Mustela Novæ-Hollandiæ, Meyen.

Dasyurus macrourus, Geoff. Ann. du Mus., tom. iii. p. 358.—Peron et Lesueur, Voy. aux Terr. Australes, pl. 33.—

Temm. Mon. de Mamm., tom. i. p. 69.—Waterh. Nat. Lib. *Marsupialia*, vol. xi. p. 139. pl. 6.

——— *maculatus*, Gray, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 98.—Waterh. Nat. Hist. Mamm., vol. i. p. 439.

THE Spotted-tailed Dasyurus is universally dispersed over every portion of Van Diemen's Land suitable to its habits and mode of life; I have also received specimens from the Liverpool Range and similar districts of New South Wales; but from no other portion of Australia have I seen examples. Rocky gullies trending from the mountain ranges through primitive forests are the favourite abode of this animal, and here, like the Pole and Martin Cats of Europe, it skulks beneath large stones and in holes of the ground; it also ascends trees with the greatest facility in pursuit of birds, which, with bandicoots and other small quadrupeds, afford it an abundant supply of food. It is a strictly nocturnal animal, and, as might be supposed, a most dreaded enemy to poultry: it is consequently regarded by the settler as one of his greatest pests.

The sexes are not distinguishable in colour, neither do the young, which are from four to six in number, materially differ in this respect; the female, however, never attains the large size of the male. It is the largest species of the genus yet discovered, and differs from all its known congeners in the spotted markings of its tail.

Mr. Waterhouse having most carefully described the colour and markings of all the members of this genus, and in many instances from specimens in my own collection, I take the liberty of transcribing the following description from his valuable work:—

“The fur is harsh to the touch, and rather short; its colour varies from a very deep brown to a rich red brown; the head is always paler than the back, and sometimes assumes a yellowish hue, being much pencilled with this pale tint; other parts of the body are more or less pencilled with yellowish, and the whole under parts of the body, as well as the fore-legs and feet, are of a dirty yellow; the upper lip, chin and throat are of a more pure yellow tint; the toes of the fore feet are yellowish; the hind legs externally, and the hind feet, scarcely differ in tint from the upper parts of the body; the tail is nearly equal in length to the head and body, cylindrical, and clothed with tolerably long and harsh hairs; its general colour is the same as that of the body, or nearly so; the ears are short, clothed internally for the most part with small yellowish hairs, but at the margin the hairs are longer, and near the anterior angle they are tolerably long; on the outer side the ears are of the same colour as the crown of the head. With regard to the white spots with which this animal is adorned, they vary considerably in different individuals, and are very irregular in size and form; they are observed on the whole of the upper parts and sides of the body; some few are also visible on the under parts and on the legs; the head is usually immaculate, or presents but two or three very small spots; the spots on the tail are often large, but never numerous.”

The Plate represents a male of the natural size.



Gould, John. 1863. "Dasyurus maculatus, Spotted-tailed Dasyurus, [Pl. 49]."
The mammals of Australia 1, -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.312786>.

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