Harriet Scott, del. et lith.

From a photograph from life by Victor A. Prout.

THE WOMBAT.

(PHASCOLOMYS WOMBAT.)

Sydney, N. S. W.—Thomas Richards, Government Printer.—1869.

The Tasmanian Wombat.

(PHASCOLOMYS WOMBAT.)

Our figure represents the Tasmanian Wombat, which is rather smaller than the New South Wales species, but closely resembles it in the skeleton. The specimen which served as a model was a remarkably tame one. General colour dusky-grey or brown, more or less mottled with light hairs, so that the fur appears grizzly; lower part of the body greyish.

All Wombats have 24 teeth, arranged as follows:—Incisors $\frac{2}{2}$, premolars $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$, molars $\frac{4-4}{4-4}$. These teeth are without fangs, are more or less curved, and resemble the teeth of the common Hare. The food of the Wombat consists of grass, herbs, roots, young twigs, and other vegetable products, so that their flesh is palatable.

All the different species form extensive burrows, in which they pass the day, coming out to feed after dark. The female produces only one young at a birth. The feet are constructed like those of the Phalangers or Opossums, to which family the Wombats are closely allied; the fore-feet have five toes, and the hind ones the same number, the inner or first toe being a small nailless thumb.

The pouch is directed upwards, as in the other marsupials that progress on all-fours, and contains four mammæ. Our present species is peculiar to Tasmania and the islands of Bass's Straits.

The New South Wales Wombat *(Phascolomys platyrhinus)* is found on the East and South Coast, extending even as far as Victoria, where also a brown variety occurs. This eastern Wombat differs little from the Tasmanian one, except that it is larger, and grows to over 80 lbs. in weight. Its colouration resembles the Tasmanian animal.

The third species inhabits the western parts of Victoria and the eastern border of South Australia. Fur sandy or yellowish, the muzzle covered with hair (all other species have this part of the head naked). Professor Owen was the first to point out the difference between this and the eastern species, and proposed the name "Broad-faced Wombat" *(Phascolomys latifrons)* for it.

A fourth variety, having brown or black, soft and silky fur, inhabits the neighbourhood of Port Lincoln, in South Australia; and for this animal the name of "Black Wombat" *(Phascolomys niger)* has been proposed. A very fine specimen of this new species is in the Museum collection; and, having examined the skull, and compared it with that of the other Wombats, we have arrived at the conclusion that it is distinct. One very decided feature of the Black Wombat's skull is the great contraction between the orbits.

Wombats were much more numerous in olden times than they are at present, and varieties existed that were twice the size of our living species. We do not know how far these animals range to the north; the temperate regions of Australia appear to be their head quarters. They have not yet been observed on the West Coast.

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Krefft, Johan Ludwig Gerhard. 1871. "The Tasmanian Wombat (Phascolomys wombat), with account of other species. [Plate V]." *The mammals of Australia : illustrated by Miss Harriett Scott, and Mrs. Helena Forde, for the Council of Education; with a short account of all the species hitherto described* 1–1. https://doi.org/10.5962/p.314734.

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