On Stone by W.E. Hitchcock

Drawn from Nature by J.W. Audubon

Yellow-cheeked Meadow Mouse.

Lith. Printed & Col'd by J.T. Bowen, Philad^a

ARVICOLA XANTHOGNATHA.—LEACH.

YELLOW-CHEEKED MEADOW-MOUSE.

PLATE CXV.—ADULT and YOUNG.

A. Supra saturate fusca, subtus argenteo-cinereus, oculis circulo pallide luteo cinctis, genis flavis.

CHARACTERS.

Dark brown on the back ; under parts, silvery grey ; pale orange around the eyes ; cheeks, yellow.

SYNONYMES.

ARVICOLA XANTHOGNATHA. Leach, Zool. Miss., vol. i. p. 60, t. 26.

“ “ Harlan, Fauna, p. 136.

“ “ Godman, Nat. Hist., vol. ii. p. 65.

CAMPAGNOL AUX JOUES FAUVES. Desm., Mamm., p. 282.

ARVICOLA XANTHOGNATHUS. Rich., Fauna Boreali Americana, p. 122.

DESCRIPTION.

Of the upper molars, the posterior one is the largest, and it has three grooves on its side ; the two anterior have two grooves each, making in all ten ridges in the upper molar teeth on each side ; of the lower molars, the anterior is the largest, and it has four grooves ; the other two have each two.

Body, nearly cylindrical ; legs, short ; nose, obtuse ; the lip is on a line with the incisors ; ears, large, rounded, and hairy on both surfaces ; whiskers, about the length of the head ; tail, shorter than the head, well covered with hairs lying smoothly and coming to a point at the extremity ; legs, rather stout, covered with short hair lying closely and smoothly ; fore feet with naked palms ; fore toes with a callosity protected by a very minute nail in place of a thumb ; the first a little shorter than the third, second largest, and fourth shortest.

The toes are well covered with smooth hair above, and are naked below ; the hair of the wrist projects a little over the palms ; claws, small ; hind feet with five toes, of which the three middle ones are nearly equal in

length ; the posterior part of the sole is covered with hair ; soles of hind feet, narrower and longer than the palms of the fore feet ; fur soft and fine, about four lines and a half long on the head, and nine on the posterior part of the back.

COLOUR.

The fur, from the roots to near the tips, is grayish-black ; on the head and back the tips are yellowish-brown or black, the black pointed hairs being the longest ; the colour resulting is a mixture of dark brown and black, without spots ; sides, paler than the back ; under parts, silvery bluish-gray.

Anterior to the shoulder, dark gray ; there is a blackish-brown stripe on the centre of the nose ; on each side of the nose a reddish-brown patch which extends to the orbit ; around the eye, pale orange ; whiskers, black ; tail, brownish-black above, whitish beneath ; feet, dark brown on the upper surface, whitish on the under.

DIMENSIONS.

	Inches.	Lines.
Length from point of nose to root of tail, - - - - -	8	
“ of head, - - - - -	1	10
“ of tail, - - - - -	1	6
Breadth of ear, - - - - -		7
Hind foot, from heel to point of claw of middle toe, -		10

HABITS.

The descriptions of its habits given by the few writers who have referred with positive certainty to this species, are very meagre, but all the arvicolæ, with slight variations, are similar in habit ; they live in low grounds, usually preferring meadows ; burrow in the banks of ponds and near water-courses, feed on grasses and seeds, have a considerable number of young at a birth, are somewhat nocturnal, and make galleries of various lengths, which enable them to traverse the neighbourhood of their nestling places and procure the roots of grasses and plants.

This species, as is mentioned by RICHARDSON and other observers, makes its long galleries under the mossy turf, on the dry banks of lakes and rivers, and also in the woods ; the specimens brought by us from Labrador were obtained from beneath large masses of moss growing on the rocks.

In some portions of the far north these hardy little animals are abundant: they were common in Labrador, and were easily captured by turning up some of the patches of moss, as just mentioned, when they were knocked over by the young men of our party.

We are told that this species has seven young at a time.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

The original specimen described by LEACH, was obtained from Hudson's Bay: we procured several in Labrador.

Although supposed, by some writers, to exist within the limits of the United States, we have never been able to refer any species of *Arvicola* that has been discovered in our States or territories to this particular animal.

GENERAL REMARKS.

As before stated, LEACH described this *Arvicola*, and he also gave a very poor figure of it; SAY supposed it to exist on the banks of the Ohio, but we think he had in view a different species; HARLAN appears not to have seen it, but gives the short description of LEACH, stating, however, that it exists in Pennsylvania and Ohio, which we presume was owing to his having mistaken for it some variety of WILSON'S meadow-mouse (*A. Pennsylvanica*); GODMAN seems to have fallen into a similar mistake; and the *Arvicola xanthognatha* of SABINE is evidently the *A. Pennsylvanica* of ORD.

Dr. DEKAY says it is found in various parts of the State of New York, but we have not been able to procure it, although we have sought for it for years; and moreover we feel obliged to state that the description (which is a very unsatisfactory one), and the figure given in the "Zoology of the State of New York," refer to quite a different animal, probably one among the many varieties of *A. Pennsylvanica*.

We feel little hesitation in stating that this species does not exist in any part of the United States, but is exclusively a northern animal.

Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1854. "Arvicola xanthognatha, Yellow-cheeked Meadow-Mouse [Pl. CXV, adult and young]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 3, 67–69. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322375>.

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