GENUS LAGOMYS.—GEOFF.

DENTAL FORMULA.

$$\text{Incisive } \frac{2-2}{1-1} \quad \text{Canine } \frac{0-0}{0-0}; \quad \text{Molar } \frac{5-5}{5-5} = 26.$$

Teeth and toes similar to those of the genus *Lepus*, upper incisors in pairs, two in front and two immediately behind them, the former large and the latter small.

Ears moderate ; eyes, round ; hind legs not much longer than fore legs ; fur under the feet ; no tail ; mammæ four or six ; clavicles nearly perfect.

Native of cold and Alpine regions. They lay up stores for winter provision which is never done by the true hares. They have a call-note resembling that of some species of *Tamias*.

The name of this sub-genus, *Lagomys*, is derived from the Greek words $\lambda\alpha\gamma\omega\varsigma$, (*lagos*), a Hare, and $\mu\upsilon\varsigma$, (*mus*), a Mouse.

Four species of this genus are described ; one, the *Pika*, exists in the northern mountains of the Old World, one in Mongolian Tartary, one in the south eastern parts of Russia, and one in the Rocky Mountains of North America.

LAGOMYS PRINCEPS.—RICHARDSON.

LITTLE-CHIEF HARE.

PLATE LXXXIII.—MALES.

L. *Ecaudatus*, fuscus, latere pallidior, subtus griseus, capite brevi ; auriculis rotundatis.

CHARACTERS.

Tailless ; colour blackish brown, beneath gray ; head short and thick ; ears rounded.

On Stone by W^m E. Hitchcock

Little Chief Hawk.

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

Lith. Printed & Col'd by J. T. Bowen, 1741

SYNONYMES.

LEPUS (LAGOMYS PRINCEPS). Rich. Fauna B. Am. p. 227.

“ “ “ Fischer's Mamalium. p. 503.

DESCRIPTION.

“On comparing the skull of this animal with that of a true Hare, there appears a larger cavity in proportion to its size, for the reception of the brain. The breadth of the skull, too, behind, is increased by very large and spongy processes. The bone anterior to the orbit is not cribriform as in the Hares, although it is thin, and there is no depression of the frontal bone between the orbits.

The upper anterior incisors are marked with a deep furrow near their anterior margins, and have cutting edges which present conjointly three well marked points, the middle one of which is common to both teeth, and is shorter than the exterior one. These incisors are much thinner than the incisors of the Hare, and are scooped out like a gouge behind. The small round posterior or accessory upper incisors, have flat summits. The lower incisors are thinner than those of the Hares, and are chamfered away toward their summits, more in the form of a gouge than like the chisel-shaped-edge of the incisors of a Hare.

Grinders.—The upper grinders are not very dissimilar to those of the Hare, on the crowns, but the transverse plates of enamel are more distinct. They differ in each tooth having a very deep furrow on its inner side, which separates the folds of enamel. This furrow is nearly obsolete in the Hares, whilst in the *lagomys* it is as conspicuous as the separation betwixt the teeth. The small posterior grinder which exists in the upper jaw of the adult Hare is entirely wanting in the different specimens of the Little-Chief Hare which I have examined. The lower grinders, from the depths of their lateral grooves, have at first sight a greater resemblance to the grinders of some animal belonging to the genus *Arvicola* than those of a Hare; their crowns exhibit a single series of acute-triangles with hollow areas. The first grinder has three not very deep grooves on a side, and is not so unlike the corresponding tooth of a Hare as those which succeed it. The second, third, and fourth, have each a groove in both sides so deep as nearly to divide the tooth, and each of the crowns exhibits two triangular folds of enamel. The posterior grinder forms only one triangle.”—(RICHARDSON).

In size this species is a little smaller than the alpine *pika* of Siberia. The body is thick; the head broad and short, and the forehead arched. The ears are ovate, and do not appear to have any incurvations on their inner margins. The eyes are small, resembling those of the *arvicolæ*; there is a marked prominent tubercle at the root of each claw.

COLOUR.

The Little-Chief Hare is, on the upper surface dark brown, varied with irregular bands of brownish-black running from the sides across the back. There are slight variations in different specimens, some having these blackish markings more distinct than others. The fur is, for three-fourths of its length, of a grayish-black colour, then partly yellowish-brown and white; on the sides of the head and fore shoulders this yellowish-brown colour prevails more than in other parts. The ears are bordered with white; the whole under surface is yellowish-gray, and the small protuberance, which represents the tail, light coloured.

DIMENSIONS.

						Inches.
Length of head and body	-	-	-	-	-	$6\frac{1}{2}$
“ from nose to eye	-	-	-	-	-	$\frac{3}{4}$
Breadth of ear	-	-	-	-	-	$\frac{3}{4}$
Fur on the back	-	-	-	-	-	$\frac{3}{4}$
Length of head	-	-	-	-	-	$2\frac{1}{4}$
Height of ear	-	-	-	-	-	1
Length of heel	-	-	-	-	-	$1\frac{1}{8}$

HABITS.

Little is known with regard to the habits of this animal.

The following extract is made from the *Fauna Boreali Americana*:

“Mr. DRUMMOND informs me, that the Little-Chief Hare frequents heaps of loose stones, through the interstices of which it makes its way with great facility. It is often seen at sunset, mounted on a stone, and calling to its mate by a peculiar shrill whistle. On the approach of man, it utters a feeble cry, like the squeak of a rabbit when hurt, and instantly disappears, to reappear in a minute or two, at the distance of twenty or thirty yards, if the object of its apprehension remains stationary. On the least movement of the intruder, it instantly conceals itself again, repeating its cry of fear; which, when there are several of the animals in the neighbourhood, is passed from one to the other. Mr. DRUMMOND describes their cry as very deceptive, and as appearing to come from an animal at a great distance, whilst in fact the little creature is close at hand; and if seated on a grey limestone rock, is so similar, that it can scarcely be discovered. These animals feed on vegetables. Mr. DRUMMOND never

found their burrows, and he thinks they do not make any, but that they construct their nests among the stones. He does not know whether they store up hay for winter or not, but is certain, that they "do not come abroad during that season."

To the above account, it affords us pleasure to annex the extract of a letter, which we received from Mr. NUTTALL on the same subject.

Of this curious species of *Lepus*, (*L. princeps* of RICHARDSON), we were not fortunate enough to obtain any good specimens. I found its range to be in that latitude (42°) almost entirely alpine. I first discovered it by its peculiar cry, far up the mountain of the dividing ridge between the waters of the Columbia and Colorado, and the Missouri, hiding amongst loose piles of rocks, such as you generally see beneath broken cliffs. From this retreat I heard a slender, but very distinct bleat, so like that of a young kid or goat, that I at first concluded it to be such a call; but in vain trying to discover any large animal around me, at length I may almost literally say, the mountain brought forth nothing much larger than a mouse, as I discovered that this little animal was the real author of this unexpected note."

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

Dr. RICHARDSON states, that this animal inhabits the Rocky Mountains from latitude 52° to 60° . The specimen of Mr. TOWNSEND was procured in latitude 42° , and therefore within the limits of the United States.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Until recently it was not supposed, that we had in America any species of this genus. We have compared it with the Pika, (*Lagomys alpinus*), of the Eastern continent, described by PALLAS. Our animal is not only of smaller size, but differs from it in the formation of the skull and several other particulars.

Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Lagomys princeps, Little-chief Hare [Pl. LXXXIII, males]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 2, 244–247. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322462>.

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