On Stone by W.B. Hitchcock

Bachman's Hares

Drawn from Nature by J.W. Audubon

Lith. Printed & Col. by J.T. Bowen Philad^a

LEPUS BACHMANI.—WATERHOUSE.

BACHMAN'S HARE.

PLATE CVIII.—Males.

L. Supra fuscus, lateribus cinereo fuscis, ventre albo rufo-tincto; L. sylvatico aliquantulo minor, auriculis capite paullo longioribus.

CHARACTERS.

A little smaller than the gray rabbit; ears rather longer than the head; tarsi, short. Colour, brown above, gray-brown on the sides, belly white, tinged with rufous.

SYNONYMES.

- LEPUS BACHMANI. Waterhouse, Proceedings Zool. Soc. 1838, p. 103.
 " " Bachman's Hare, Bach. Jour. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., vol. viii.
 part 1, p. 96.
 " " Waterhouse, Nat. Hist. Mamm., vol. ii. p. 124.

DESCRIPTION.

This Hare bears a general resemblance to the gray rabbit (*L. sylvaticus*), but is considerably smaller: the fur is softer and the ears shorter than in that species.

Upper incisors, much arched, and deeply grooved; claws, slender and pointed—the claw of the longest toe remarkably slender; ears longer than the head, sparingly furnished with hair quite fine and closely adpressed externally; tail, short; feet, thickly clothed with hair covering the nails.

COLOUR.

The fur on the back and sides is deep gray at the roots, annulated near the ends of the hairs with brownish-white, and black at the points. On the belly the hair is gray at the roots and white at the points, with a tinge of red; chest and fore parts of the neck, gray-brown, each hair being dusky at the tip; chin and throat, grayish-white; the hairs on the head are brownish-

rufous; on the flanks there is an indistinct pale longitudinal dash just above the haunches; under surface of tail white, edged with brownish-black; general colour of the tarsus above, dull-rufous; sides of tarsus, brown; ears, on the fore part mottled with black and yellowish-white, on the hinder part greyish-white; internally the ears are dull orange, with a white margin all around their openings; their apical portion is obscurely margined with black.

DIMENSIONS.

	Inches.	Lines.
Length from point of nose to root of tail, - - - - -	10	
Tail (vertebræ), - - - - -		9
“ to end of fur, - - - - -	1	3
Ear internally, - - - - -	2	8
From heel to point of longest nail, - - - - -	3	
Tip of nose to ear, - - - - -	2	5

HABITS.

The manners of this pretty Hare, as observed in Texas by J. W. AUDUBON, appear to assimilate to those of the common rabbit (*Lepus sylvaticus*), the animal seldom quitting a particular locality, and making its form in thick briar patches or tufts of rank grass, keeping near the edges of the woody places, and being seen in the evenings, especially for a short time after sunset, when it can be easily shot.

We have been favoured with the following particulars as to the habits of this Hare by our esteemed friend Captain J. P. McCOWN of the United States Army:

“This Hare is deficient in speed, and depends for its safety upon dodging among the thick and thorny chaparals or nopal clusters (*cacti*) which it inhabits, never venturing far from these coverts.

“Large numbers can be seen early in the morning or late in the evening, playing in the small openings or on the edges of the chaparals, or nibbling the tender leaves of the nopal, which seems to be the common prickly pear of our country, only much larger from congeniality of climate.”

“The principal enemies of these Hares in Texas are the cat species, hawks, and snakes.”

During the war with Mexico, some of the soldiers of our army who were stationed on the Mexican frontier had now and then a sort of battue, to kill all the game they could in their immediate vicinity; and by surrounding a space of tolerably open ground, especially if well covered with high

grass or weeds, and approaching gradually to the centre, numbers of these Hares were knocked down with clubs as they attempted to make their escape, as well as occasionally other animals which happened to be secreted within the circle. We were told that a raw German recruit, who had once or twice before been made the butt of his comrades, having joined only a few days, was invited to partake of the sport, and as the excitement became quite agreeable to him, was amongst the foremost in knocking down the unfortunate Hares, as they dashed out or timidly squatted yet a moment, hoping not to be observed; when suddenly one of his companions pointed out to him a *skunk*, which, notwithstanding the din and uproar on all sides, was very quietly awaiting the course of events. The unlucky recruit darted forward:—we need say nothing more, except that during the remainder of the war the skunk was, by that detachment, known only as the “Dutchman’s rabbit.”

This Hare so much resembles the common rabbit, that it has been generally considered the same animal; and this is not singular, for the gray rabbit does not extend to those portions of our country in which BACHMAN’S Hare is found, and few, save persons of some observation, would perceive the differences between them, even if they had both species together so that they could compare them.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

Lieut. ABERT, of the United States Army, procured specimens of this Hare in the neighbourhood of Santa Fé, which were the first that were made known to naturalists as existing east of California, as the animal was described from a specimen sent by DOUGLAS from the western shores of America. It now appears that it occupies a great portion of Texas, New Mexico, and California, probably extending south through great part of Mexico. Its northeastern limit may be about the head waters of the Red river or the Arkansas.

GENERAL REMARKS.

From the small size of this Hare, it was at one time considered possible that it might prove to be only the young of some other species of *Lepus*, but its specific characters are now fully established, and it is, at present, known as more numerous in some localities than even the gray rabbit.

This species was discovered among a collection of skins in the museum of the Zoological Society by Dr. BACHMAN and Mr. WATERHOUSE, and the latter gentleman having desired the doctor to allow him to describe and

name it, called it *L. Bachmani*, in compliment to him. Our figures were made from the specimen described by Mr. WATERHOUSE, which is yet in the museum of the Zoological Society at London. We have obtained many skins since, from Texas and the southwestern portions of New Mexico.

Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1854. "Lepus bachmani, Backman's Hare [Pl. CVIII, males]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 3, 35–38.

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