

# PROCYON CANCRIVORUS.—Cuv.

CRAB-EATING RACCOON.

## PLATE CLV.

*P. Supra canescens plus minus in nigrum vergens, subtus flavo-albente, pedibus fuscescentibus, facie albidâ, fascia oculum circumcingente et cum oppositâ confluyente nigra ; caudâ rufescente, annulis nigris.*

### CHARACTERS.

*Body, above greyish, more or less shaded with black ; beneath, light yellow ; feet brownish yellow ; face whitish ; a black band surrounding the eye uniting with the opposite one ; tail reddish, annulated with black.*

### SYNONYMES.

URSUS CANCRIVORUS.—Cuv. Regne An., i., p. 138.

RATON CRABIER.—Buff. His. Nat., Suppl. vi., p. 236, t. 32.

AGUARA-POPÉ.—D'Azara, Essai i., p. 327.

PROCYON CANCRIVORUS.—Desm. in Nouv. Dict. xxxix., p. 93. 2.

“ “ Briggins, Paraguay, p. 213.

“ “ Prince Max. Wied, Beitrage ii., p. 301.

“ “ Griffith An. Kingd., Synopsis, Species 325, p. 114.

“ “ Weigmann, Arch. iii., p. 371.

“ “ Rengger, Paraguay, p. 113.

### DESCRIPTION.

Body longer and more slender than that of the common Raccoon (*P. lotor*), legs longer, ears shorter, less rounded, and more pointed, and tail thinner than in the latter species. The tail diminishes towards the end. Hairs coarse ; nails prominent ; feet closely haired ; under-fur short and sparse.

### COLOUR.

Point of nose black ; whiskers white and black, a blackish band around the eyes, extending nearly to the ears ; sides of the face, and above the eyes, and a spot on the forehead, whitish ; extremities of ears yellowish white, their bases dark brown ; nails black ; tail barred with black and white ; cheeks, jaws, under-part of the neck, breast, and belly, white, with a tinge of yellowish brown. Upper surface of body ash-brown.





On Stone by W<sup>m</sup> E. Hitchcock

*Crab-eating Raccoon*

Drawn from Nature by J. W. Audubon

Lith. Printed & Col<sup>d</sup> by J. T. Bowen, Phil





## DIMENSIONS.

	Inches.
From point of nose to root of tail, - - - - -	22
Tail (vertebræ), - - - - -	9
Point of nose to ear, - - - - -	4½
Fore leg to point of longest nail, - - - - -	8
Thigh to point of longest nail, - - - - -	8
Breadth of skull, - - - - -	3½

## HABITS.

This Raccoon, as observed (in California) by Mr. J. E. CLEMENTS, generally conceals itself during the day in the oak trees which, from decay, afford holes into which it can retreat. It climbs with great agility up the rough bark of these until it reaches some decayed branch in which a cavity sufficiently large to hide in is found. There is a singular fact in this connexion, which is that most part of the rotted holes or places in these California oaks are found in the branches, not in the trunk. We are informed that many trees cut down for the purpose of making fence-rails, &c., are quite sound in the main stem, but the reverse in the branches, and that occasionally a large lateral branch will break down and fall to the ground—perchance startling the hunter who may be listening in hopes of hearing the sound of an approaching animal.

The food of this species consists of acorns, grapes, berries, eggs, birds, &c., and of late it has been known to attack chickens on the farms of the isolated settlers, sometimes endeavouring to take them off the trees adjoining the houses.

The flesh of these animals, when boiled first, and afterwards roasted, is very palatable, and not much unlike fresh pork. They are, however, generally lean, and by no means as fat as the Raccoon of our Atlantic States.

This species has been seen by Mr. CLEMENTS on more than one occasion, apparently keeping company with the black-tailed deer (*C. Richardsonii*), being on the mountains, following the same route, among several of these animals.

Two of those killed by Mr. CLEMENTS had been put up a tree by a dog during the night, and were discovered by the barking of the latter in the morning. They were only about half a mile from the house, and when approached, did not offer to come down, or otherwise attempt to escape. They had not ascended the tree more than some twenty feet from the ground.

During the night these Raccoons appear to wander about, in quest of



food, perhaps, to an extent that is almost surprising, so that their tracks can be seen in great numbers in various places, as, even in the dry season, the peculiar tenacity of the soil retains the impression made by their feet, almost as if it were the moulding-sand of the founder.

They are, however, very often observed near the water-courses, are fond of frogs, fish, &c., and their tracks are most likely to be seen in the neighbourhood of streams, even when they are partially dried up, and present only a water-hole here and there.

We have no further knowledge of the habits of this species than the information given in the works of BUFFON, SCHOMBURG, D'AZARA, RENGGER, WAGNER, and the Prince of NEUWIED. In Guiana it is found on the sea-coast; in Brazil and Paraguay, in the bushes and forests, near the rivers and lakes. Besides crabs, it eats birds, eggs, fruits, and is especially fond of sugar-cane. In two individuals that had been tamed, RENGGER did not observe the peculiarity that they dipped their food in the water. SCHOMBURG (Ann. Nat. Hist., iv. 434), however, mentions this habit of others which he saw.

In giving this account of the Crab-Eating Raccoon, we are not entirely without some doubts as to whether the animal found in Brazil and other parts of South America, may not be different from the one in Mexico, Texas, and California. We have, however, inclined to the conclusion that they are the same species, and this the more readily, as the Common Raccoon (*P. lotor*) has a range from Texas to quite a high northern latitude.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

From South America, beyond the tropic, to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and on the west as far as California, this species is distributed, but is probably most abundant within the tropics. WAGNER states that it is found from the Caribbean Sea to the 26th parallel of south latitude; BUFFON and SCHOMBURG inform us it exists in Guiana, and we learn from Prince NEUWIED that it inhabits Brazil; while RENGGER and D'AZARA mention its occurrence in Paraguay.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

The figure of the Crab-Eating Raccoon, given in our plate, was made by J. W. AUDUBON in the British Museum, from a specimen procured in Mexico or California.

Our description was taken from another specimen in the Charleston

College Museum. This may account for any slight differences between the figure and description.

We have not possessed opportunities of instituting a careful comparison between this animal and *Procyon Lotor*; they appear, however, to be specifically distinct.



Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1854. "Procyon cancrivorus, Crab Eating Raccoon [Pl. CLV]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 3, 272–275.  
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