SCIURUS FULIGINOSUS.—BACH.

SOOTY SQUIRREL.

PLATE CXLIX. FIG. 2.

Sciuro Hudsonio paullo major ; caudâ nonnihil planâ, et corpore multo brevior ; colore plerumque supra nigro, subfusco-flavo variegato ; infra subfusco.

CHARACTERS.

A little larger than the Hudson's Bay Squirrel (S. Hudsonius) ; tail, flattish, and much shorter than the body ; general colour, black above, grizzled with brownish-yellow ; beneath, brownish.

SYNONYME.

SCIURUS FULIGINOSUS. Bach., Monograph of the genus Sciurus, Trans. Zool. Soc., London, August, 1838.

DESCRIPTION.

Head, short, and broad ; nose, very obtuse ; ears, short, and rounded, slightly clothed with hair ; feet and claws, rather short and strong ; tail, short, and flattened, but not broad, resembling that of *Sciurus Hudsonius* ; the form of the body is like that of the Carolina gray Squirrel.

COLOUR.

The limbs externally, and feet, are black, obscurely grizzled with brownish-yellow ; on the under parts, with the exception of the chin and throat, which are grayish, the hairs are annulated with brownish-orange and black ; at the roots, they are grayish-white ; the prevailing colour of the tail is black above, the hairs being brown at the base, some of them obscurely annulated with brown, and at the apex pale brown ; on the under side of the tail, the hairs exhibit pale yellowish-brown annulations.

DIMENSIONS.

					Inches.	Lines
Length of head and body,	-	-	-	-	10	
“ tail (vertebræ),	-	-	-	-	6	9

On Stone by W^m P. Hitchcock

Fig 1 Fremont's Squirrel. Fig 2 Sooty Squirrel.

	Inches.	Lines.
Length of tail (including fur), - - - - -	8	6
“ palm to point of middle fore-claw, - - -	1	8
“ heel, to point of longest nail, - - - -	2	1
Height of ear posteriorly, - - - - -		4
Length of fur on the back, - - - - -		7

HABITS.

This dusky looking species is found in low swampy situations, and is said to be very abundant in favourable localities.

During high freshets, when the swamps are overflowed to the height of several feet, they are very active among the trees, leaping from branch to branch, indifferent about the waters beneath. They feed chiefly on pecan nuts, and are deemed by the French inhabitants of Louisiana to be the most savoury of all the Squirrels.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

We have heard of this species as existing only in Louisiana and Mississippi, and as being chiefly confined to the swamps.

GENERAL REMARKS.

We are under the impression that this Squirrel is subject to considerable variations in colour. We obtained, through the kindness of Col. WADE HAMPTON, a number of specimens of the different Squirrels existing along the shores of the Mississippi, and among them we found several examples of this species. Some of them were of much lighter colours than the one which we described. In Louisiana, they are often so dark in colour, as to be called by the French inhabitants *le petit noir*.

The specimen from which our original description was made, was procured near New Orleans, on the 24th of March, 1837. It agrees in many particulars with a skin deposited in the late museum of Mr. PEALE at Philadelphia, which, with other specimens in that collection, is now probably lost for ever. Dr. HARLAN referred to it as *S. rufiventer*, but it did not agree with DESMAREST's description of that species, as we ascertained by comparing it. On examining the description Dr. HARLAN gave of the specimen to which he referred, we ascertained that instead of describing it himself, he had, with slight variations, translated DESMAREST's description.

Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1854. "Sciurus fuliginosus, Sooty Squirrel [Pl. CXLIX]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 3, 240–241.

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