



Hudson's Bay Squirrel - Chickaree-Red Squirrel.

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SCIURUS HUDSONIUS.—PENNANT.

HUDSON'S BAY SQUIRREL.—CHICKAREE.—RED-SQUIRREL.

PLATE XIV.—MALE AND FEMALE.

S. cauda corpore brevior, auriculis apice sub-barbatis; corpore supra subrufo, subtus albo; S. migratorii tertia parte minore.

CHARACTERS.

A third smaller than the Northern Gray-Squirrel, (Sc. migratorius;) tail shorter than the body; ears, slightly tufted; colour, reddish above, white beneath.

SYNONYMES.

- ECUREUIL COMMUN, ou AROUPEN, Sagard Theodat, Canada, p. 746.
 COMMON SQUIRREL, Forster, Phil. Trans., vol. lxii., p. 378, 1772.
 SCIURUS VULGARIS, var. E. Erxleben, Syst., An. 1777.
 SCIURUS HUDSONICUS, Pallas, Glir., p. 377.
 SCIURUS HUDSONICUS, Gmel., Linn., ——— 1788.
 HUDSON'S BAY SQUIRREL, Penn. Arctic Zool., vol. i., p. 116.
 " " " " Hist. Quadrupeds, vol. ii., p. 147.
 COMMON SQUIRREL, Hearnes' Journey, p. 385.
 RED SQUIRREL, Warden's Hist. U. S., vol. i., p. 330.
 RED BARKING SQUIRREL, Schoolcraft's Journal, p. 273.
 SCIURUS HUDSONICUS, Sabine, Franklin's Journey, p. 663.
 " " " Godman, vol. ii., p. 138.
 " " " Fischer, Mam., p. 349.
 ECUREUIL DE LA BAIE D'HUDSON, F. Cuvier, Hist. Nat. des Mammifères.
 SCIURUS HUDSONICUS, Bach. Trans. Zool. Soc., London, 1839.
 " " " Dekay, Nat. Hist. New-York, 1842.

DESCRIPTION.

On examining the teeth of this species, we do not find the small and usually deciduous molar that exists in all the other species of *SCIURUS* with which we are acquainted; it is possible, however, that it may be found in very young animals. It will be perceived, on referring to the dental formula of the genus, (which we have given at p. 38,) that the

molars are set down as $\frac{4}{4}=\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{5}{4}=\frac{5}{4}$; and we will for the present assign the former arrangement to this species. Forehead, very slightly arched; nose, somewhat obtuse; eyes, of moderate size; ears, broad, rounded, clothed on both sides with short hairs, not distinctly tufted like those of the European Squirrel, (*Sc. vulgaris*), although the hairs, when the animal has its winter pelage, project beyond the margins, and resemble tufts; whiskers, a little longer than the head; the body presents the appearance of lightness and agility; the tail is somewhat depressed, and linear, not as bushy as in most other squirrels, but capable of a distichous arrangement; limbs, robust; claws, compressed, sharp, slightly hooked; third toe a little the longest; palms, and under surface of the toes, naked; soles of hind-feet, clothed with hair, except on the tubercles at the roots of the toes.

COLOUR.

This species exhibits some shades of difference in colour, and we have sometimes, although very rarely, found a specimen that might be regarded as a variety. General colour, deep reddish-brown on the whole of the upper surface; short fur beneath, plumbeous, mixed with so large a quantity of longer hairs, that the colour of the fur does not show on the surface. These long hairs are dark at the roots, then brown, and are slightly tipped with black. In most specimens there is an orange hue on the outer surface of the fore-legs, running up to the shoulder; this colour is also frequently visible on the upper surface of the hind-feet, and behind the ears. Whiskers, black; tail, on the upper surface, deep reddish-brown; the hair on the sides may be so arranged as to present a line of black near the outer borders; on the under side it has two or three annulations of light-brown and black; lips, chin, throat, inside of legs, and belly, white; in some specimens the hairs on these parts of the body are plumbeous at the roots, and white to the tips, giving it a light, grayish-white appearance. There is in a great many specimens a black line, running from near the shoulders along the sides to within an inch of the thighs.

DIMENSIONS.

Recent specimen.

						Inches.	Lines.
Length from nose to root of tail	-	-	-	-	-	8	0
Tail (vertebræ)	-	-	-	-	-	3	7
Tail to end of hair	-	-	-	-	-	6	5

HABITS.

The genus *SCIURUS* is illustrated in North America by a greater variety of species than any other among the various genera we shall have the pleasure of introducing to our readers:—Permit us to dwell for a moment on the subject, and to relate the following anecdote:

When we began the publication in Great Britain of the “Birds of America,” we were encouraged by the approbation of many excellent friends, and by the more essential, although less heartfelt favours, bestowed by those noblemen and gentlemen who kindly subscribed to the work, and without whose aid, it is frankly acknowledged, it could never have been completed. Among those whom we then had the honour of calling patrons, we found as many varieties of character as among the beautiful feathered inhabitants of our woods, lakes, and sea-shores, themselves; and had we time just now to spare, we might undertake to describe some of them. We published as the first plate of the first number of “The Birds of America,” the Wild Turkey Cock, and gave the Turkey Hen and Young, as the first plate of the second number. We need not stop to enumerate the other species of birds that completed those two numbers; but judge of our surprise, on being told gravely, by a certain noble subscriber, that, “as the work was to consist of *Turkeys* only, he begged to be allowed to discontinue his subscription!”

Now, kind reader, we are obliged to follow Nature in the works of infinite wisdom, which we humbly attempt to portray; and although you should find that more Squirrels inhabit our forests than you expected or desired to be figured in this work, we assure you it would give us pleasure to discover a new species at any time! We are not, however, wanting in a due knowledge of the sympathy and kindness that exist among our patrons toward us, and we hope you will find this really beautiful genus as interesting as any other among the quadrupeds we desire to place before you.

The Chickaree, or Hudson's Bay Squirrel, is the most common species of this numerous genus around New-York and throughout the Eastern States. It is a graceful, lively animal, and were you to walk with us through the woods in the neighbourhood of our great commercial metropolis, where boys and sportsmen (?) for years past have been hunting in every direction, and killing all the game left in the vicinity; where woodcocks are shot before the first of July, and quails (Virginian partridges) when they are half-grown, in defiance of the laws for their preservation, you would be glad to find the comparative silence which now

reigns amid the trees, interrupted by the sprightly querulous cry of the Chickaree, and would pause with us to look at him as he runs along the rocky surface of the ground, or nimbly ascends some tree; for in these woods, once no doubt abounding in both beasts and birds, it is now a hard task to start anything larger than a robin, or a *High-hole*, (*Picus auratus*.) The Hudson's Bay Squirrel is fearless and heedless, to a great degree, of the presence of man; we have had one occasionally pass through our yard, sometimes ascending an oak or a chesnut, and proceeding leisurely through our small woody lawn. These little animals are generally found singly, although it is not uncommon for many to occupy the same piece of wood-land, if of any extent. In their quick graceful motions from branch to branch, they almost remind one of a bird, and they are always neat and cleanly in their coats, industrious, and well provided for the cold of winter.

In parts of the country, the Chickaree is fond of approaching the farmer's store-houses of grain, or other products of the fields, and occasionally it ventures even so far as to make a nest for itself in some of his out-buildings, and is not dislodged from such snug quarters without undergoing a good deal of persecution.

One of these Squirrels made its nest between the beams and the rafters of a house of the kind we have just spoken of, and finding the skin of a peacock in the loft, appropriated the feathers to compose its nest, and although it was destroyed several times, to test the perseverance of the animal, it persisted in re-constructing it. The Chickaree obtained this name from its noisy chattering note, and like most other Squirrels, is fond of repeating its cries at frequent intervals. Many of the inhabitants of our Eastern States refuse to eat Squirrels of any kind, from some prejudice or other; but we can assure our readers that the flesh of this species, and many others, is both tender and well-flavoured, and when nicely broiled, does not require a hunter's appetite to recommend it.

The habits of this little Squirrel are, in several particulars, peculiar; whilst the larger Gray Squirrels derive their sustenance from buds and nuts, chiefly inhabit warm or temperate climates, and are constitutionally fitted to subsist during winter on a small quantity of food, the Chickaree exhibits the greatest sprightliness and activity amidst the snows and frosts of our Northern regions, and consequently is obliged, during the winter season, to consume as great a quantity of food as at any other. Nature has, therefore, instructed it to make provision in the season of abundance for the long winter that is approaching; and the quantity of nuts and seeds it often lays up in its store-house, is almost incredible. On one occasion we were present when a bushel and a half of

shell-barks (*Carya alba*), and chesnuts, were taken from a hollow tree occupied by a single pair of these industrious creatures; although generally the quantity of provision laid up by them is considerably less. The Chickaree has too much foresight to trust to a single hoard, and it often has several, in different localities among the neighbouring trees, or in burrows dug deep in the earth. Occasionally these stores are found under leaves, beneath logs, or in brush-heaps; at other times they are deposited in holes in the ground; and they are sometimes only temporarily laid by in some convenient situation to be removed at leisure. When, for instance, nuts are abundant in the autumn, large quantities in the green state, covered by their thick envelope, are collected in a heap near the tree whence they have fallen; they are then covered up with leaves until the pericarp, or thick outer covering, either falls off or opens, when the Squirrel is able to carry off the nuts more conveniently. In obtaining shell-barks, butter-nuts, (*Juglans cinerea*), chesnuts, hazel-nuts, &c., this Squirrel adopts the mode of most of the other species. It advances as near to the extremity of the branch as it can with safety, and gnaws off that portion on which the nuts are dependent. This is usually done early in the morning, and the noise occasioned by the falling of large bunches of chesnut burrs, or clusters of butter-nuts, hickory, or beech-nuts, thus detached from the parent stem, may be heard more than a hundred yards off. Some of the stems attached to the nuts are ten inches or a foot in length. After having thrown down a considerable quantity, the Squirrel descends and drags them into a heap, as stated above.

Sometimes the hogs find out these stores, and make sad havoc in the temporary depot. But Providence has placed much food of a different kind within reach of the Red-Squirrel during winter. The cones of many of our pines and firs in high northern latitudes are persistent during winter; and the Chickaree can be supported by the seeds they contain, even should his hoards of nuts fail. This little Squirrel seems also to accommodate itself to its situation in another respect. In Pennsylvania and the southern part of New-York, where the winters are comparatively mild, it is very commonly satisfied with a hollow tree as a winter residence; but in the latitude of Saratoga, N. Y., in the northern part of Massachusetts, in New Hampshire, Maine, Canada, and farther north, it usually seeks for additional protection from the cold by forming deep burrows in the earth. Nothing is more common than to meet with five or six Squirrel-holes in the ground, near the roots of some white pine or hemlock; and these retreats can be easily found by the vast heaps of scales from the cones of pines and firs, which are in process of time accumulated around them. This species can both swim and dive. We once

observed some lads shaking a Red-Squirrel from a sapling that grew on the edge of a mill-pond. It fell into the water and swam to the opposite shore, performing the operation of swimming moderately well, and reminding us by its movements of the meadow-mouse, when similarly occupied. It was "headed" by its untiring persecutors on the opposite shore, where on being pelted with sticks, we noticed it diving two or three times, not in the graceful curving manner of the mink, or musk-rat, but with short and ineffectual plunges of a foot or two at a time.

We have kept the Chickaree in cages, but found it less gentle and more difficult to be tamed than many other species of the genus.

RICHARDSON informs us that in the fur countries, "the Indian boys kill many with the bow and arrow, and also take them occasionally with snares set round the trunks of the trees which they frequent." We have observed that during winter a steel-trap baited with an ear of corn, (maize,) placed near their burrows at the foot of large pine or spruce trees, will secure them with the greatest ease.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

The limits of the northern range of this species are not precisely determined, but all travellers who have braved the snows of our Polar regions, speak of its existence as far north as their journeys extended. It has been observed in the 68th or 69th parallel of latitude; it also exists in Labrador, Newfoundland and Canada. It is the most common species in New-England and New-York, and is by no means rare in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, especially in the hilly or mountainous portions of the latter State. It is seen, in diminished numbers, in the mountains of Virginia, although in the alluvial parts of that State it is scarcely known; as we proceed southwardly it becomes more rare, but still continues to be met with on the highest mountains. The most southern locality to which we have traced it, is a high peak called the Black mountain, in Buncombe county, N. Carolina. The woods growing in that elevated situation are in some places wholly composed of balsam-fir trees, (*Abies balsamea*), on the cones of which these Squirrels feed. There this little animal is quite common, and has received a new English name, viz., that of, "Mountain boomer." Toward the west we have traced it to the mountains of Tennessee; beyond the Rocky mountains, it does not exist. In the Russian settlements on the Western coast, it is replaced by the Downy Squirrel, (*Sc. lanuginosus*.) In the vicinity of the Columbia, and for several hundred miles along the mountains South of that river, by RICHARDSON'S Columbian Squirrel; and in the mountainous regions border-

ing on California, by another small species much resembling it, which we hope, hereafter, to present to our readers.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Although this species, from its numbers and familiarity as well as from its general diffusion, has been longer known than any other of our Squirrels, and has been very frequently described, it has, with few exceptions, retained its name of *Hudsonius*. ERXLEBEN supposed it to be only a variety of the common Squirrel, *S. vulgaris* of Europe, and so described it. The *Sciurus Hudsonius* of GMELIN is a flying Squirrel, (*Pteromys sabrinus*,) and the Carolina Gray Squirrel, which in Shaw's General Zoology, vol. ii., p. 141, is given as a variety of *Sciurus Hudsonius*, is our own species, (*Sc. Carolinensis*.) This species was unknown to LINNÆUS. PALLAS appears to have been the first author who gave the specific name of *Hudsonius*, (see Pall. Glir., p. 377, A. D. 1786,) and GMELIN, in 1788, adopted his name.

In examining the form and inquiring into the habits of this species, we cannot but observe a slight approach to TAMIAS, and a more distant one to SPERMOPHILUS. Its ears are placed farther back than in the Squirrels generally, its tail is only sub-distichous, and withal it often digs its own burrow, and lives indiscriminately in the ground and on trees. In all these particulars it appears, in connexion with the Downy Squirrel, (*Sc. lanuginosus*,) to form a connecting link between SCIURUS and TAMIAS. It has, however, no cheek pouches, and does not carry its food in its cheeks in the manner of the TAMIAE and SPERMOPHILI, but between its front teeth, like the rest of the squirrels.



Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Sciurus Hudsonius, Hudson's Bay Squirrel — Chickaree — Red Squirrel [Pl. XIV, male and female]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 1, 125–131.

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