

SPERMOPHILUS DOUGLASSII.—RICHARDSON.

DOUGLASS' SPERMOPHILE.

PLATE XLIX.

Auribus insignibus ; versus humeros canescens ; corpore dilute fusco, striis multis indistinctis transversis fuscis et albis, linea nigra inter humeros ; cauda, longa, cylindrica, pilis albo nigroque annulatis.

CHARACTERS.

Ears, conspicuous ; hoary on the shoulders, with a black stripe between them ; general colour of the body, pale-brown, with many indistinct transverse marks of dark-brown and white. Tail, long and cylindrical, hairs annulated with white and black.

SYNONYMES.

ARCTOMYS (SPERMOPHILUS ?) DOUGLASSII, Richardson, F. B. A., p. 172.

ARCTOMYS (SPERMOPHILUS) BEECHEYI, Richardson, F. B. A., p. 170. ?

DESCRIPTION.

In the general form of the body Douglass' *Spermophile* bears a strong resemblance to several species of squirrel. Its rather slender shape and long ears and tail, together with its large eyes and the form of its head, assimilate it to the Northern gray squirrel, (*S. migratorius*.) Its coarser fur, however, cheek-pouches, rounder tail, and the shape of its claws, clearly designate the genus to which it belongs.

Head, rather short, broad and depressed ; nose, obtuse ; ears, long, semi-oval, covered on both surfaces with short hairs, which in winter specimens extend a line beyond the margins at their extremities ; cheek-pouches of moderate size.

The longer hairs of the body are rather coarse, they are slender at their roots, gradually enlarge as they ascend, and suddenly taper off to a point at the tips. The fur beneath is on the back and sides soft and dense ; on the under surface, however, the longer hairs predominate, and the animal is in those parts but thinly clothed.

There are on the fore-feet four toes with a blunt nail in place of a thumb. The second toe is longest ; the nails are of moderate size, and

slightly hooked. The feet are covered with short adpressed hairs to the roots of the nails; the tail is long and cylindrical, the longest hairs two inches in length. Mammæ ten, four pectoral and six abdominal.

COLOUR.

Incisors, dark orange; moustaches, black; on the nose and forehead, a tinge of reddish-brown; around the eyes, white; inner surface of ear, dull yellowish-brown; outer surface, dark-brown, becoming nearly black at the tips; sides of the face, yellowish white. The sides of the neck and shoulders have a hoary appearance. There is a broad, dark-brown stripe commencing on the neck, widening in its descent, and continuing along the centre of the back for about half the length of the body, when it gradually blends with the colours on the sides and hips, which are irregularly speckled with white and black on a yellowish-brown ground. Nails, black; inner surface of legs, and whole under surface of body, dull yellowish-white. All the feet are grayish-brown.

The under-fur on every part of the back is dark-brown; the longer hairs are brown at their roots, then yellowish; those on the dorsal line are broadly tipped with black, whilst on the shoulders the tips are white. The spots on the back and hips are formed by some of the hairs being tipped with white, others with black. The hairs on the tail are at their roots white, then three times annulated with black and white, and are tipped with white; thus when distichously arranged, (which, however, does not seem natural to the animal,) the tail presents three narrow longitudinal black stripes, and four white ones. Under-surface of tail, dull yellowish-gray.

There are some variations in the colour of different specimens. An old female that was suckling her young at the time she was caught had the dark dorsal line on the shoulders very indistinctly visible, and her feet were much lighter coloured than in younger specimens.

DIMENSIONS.

An old female.

Length of head and body	-	-	-	-	-	13 $\frac{1}{2}$	inches.
Tail (vertebræ)	-	-	-	-	-	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	do.
Tail, to end of fur	-	-	-	-	-	9	do.
Height of ear	-	-	-	-	-	$\frac{1}{2}$	do.
From heel to longest nail	-	-	-	-	-	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	do.
From eye to point of nose	-	-	-	-	-	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	do.

An old male.

Length of head and body	-	-	-	-	13 $\frac{3}{4}$	inches.
Tail (vertebræ)	-	-	-	-	8	do.
Tail, to end of fur	-	-	-	-	9 $\frac{1}{3}$	do.
Height of ear	-	-	-	-	$\frac{1}{2}$	do.
From heel to point of nail	-	-	-	-	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	do.

Young.

Length of head and body	-	-	-	-	9	do.
Tail (vertebræ)	-	-	-	-	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	do.
Tail, to end of fur	-	-	-	-	6 $\frac{1}{3}$	do.
Height of ear	-	-	-	-	$\frac{1}{2}$	do.
Tarsus	-	-	-	-	2	do.

HABITS.

We regret to state, that with the habits of this species we are wholly unacquainted. Mr. TOWNSEND, who kindly loaned us four specimens, from which we made our drawing and prepared our description, did not furnish us with any account of them.

Of *Spermophilus Beecheyi*, which we have supposed might be found identical with this species, Dr. RICHARDSON states that, "Mr. COLLIE, surgeon of his majesty's ship Blossom, informs me that this kind of Spermophile burrows in great numbers in the sandy declivities and dry plains in the neighbourhood of San Francisco and Monterey, in California, close to the houses. They frequently stand upon their hind-legs when looking round about them. In running they carry the tail generally straight out, but when passing over any little inequality, it is raised as if to prevent its being soiled. In rainy weather, and when the fields are wet and dirty, they come but little above ground. They take the alarm when any one passes within twenty or thirty yards of them, and run off at full speed till they can reach the mouth of their hole, where they stop a little and then enter it; they soon come out again, but with caution, and if not molested, will proceed to their usual occupation of playing or feeding. *Artemesias* and other vegetable matters were found in their stomachs."

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

One of the specimens obtained by Mr. TOWNSEND is marked "Falls of the Columbia River," another "Walla-walla;" the specimen procured by DOUGLASS was obtained on the banks of the Columbia River, and if our conjectures are correct, that *S. Beecheyi* is the same as the present species, it exists also in considerable numbers in California.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The first description of this species was given by Dr. RICHARDSON, who received from DOUGLASS a hunter's skin, which, containing no skull, he was prevented from deciding on the genus. We have ascertained that in its dentition it is a true *Spermophile*, and in all other respects possesses the characteristics of that genus.

In the valuable collection of the London Zoological Society we examined a specimen of *S. Beecheyi*, brought by Mr. COLLIE, which so strikingly resembles this species, that we are greatly inclined to think they will yet be found identical; we have, therefore, quoted it for the present as a synonyme, but marked it with a doubt, as an examination of a greater number of specimens might probably change our views.



Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Spermophilus Douglassii, Douglass' Spermophile, [Pl. XLIX]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 1, 373–376. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322578>.

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