

4. On a new Rodent of the Genus *Lophuromys* from British East Africa. By W. E. DE WINTON, F.Z.S.

[Received May 15, 1896.]

(Plate XXVII.)

In a small series of mammals presented to the National Collection by Dr. W. J. Ansorge, Medical Officer to Her Majesty's Government in Uganda, who is now home on leave, I find two specimens of a very handsome mouse of the genus *Lophuromys* new to science, which I propose to name in honour of the collector.

LOPHUROMYS ANSORGEI, sp. n. (Plate XXVII.)

The whole of the upper parts of the head and body smooth dark chocolate colour, with no markings whatever; the underparts uniform pale cinnamon; the feet dark above and below; the tail black-brown, slightly greyer beneath, especially basally, rather short and thick, covered with hair, but not densely enough to conceal the scales; ears moderate, rounded, covered with close short hairs.

On parting the fur of the upper parts it will be found that the tips only of the hairs are dark, shading gradually into bright tan at the bases; there is no underfur; all the hairs are perfectly straight, of a uniform length and of very much the consistency of a stiff camel's-hair brush.

Measurements taken from dried skin:—Head and body 135 mm.; tail 49 mm.; pes 22 mm.; forearm and hand 33 mm.

Skull: greatest length 33.5 mm., greatest breadth 17 mm.; basifacial length 20 mm.; basicranial length 10 mm.; incisive foramina—length 6.5 mm., breadth 2.8 mm.; nasals—length 15 mm., breadth 3.5 mm.; upper molar series 5.5 mm.; lower molar series 5 mm.; mandibles, from condyle to incisor tips, 24 mm.

Hab. Mumia's, Kavirondo, N.E. of Lake Victoria.

Type no. 96. V. 8. 1, in Brit. Mus.

The nearest ally of this species is most likely *L. sikapusi* from West Africa, but it is easily distinguished by its rather larger size and much darker and handsomer colouring.

Seen through a lens, each hair is flattened like a blade of grass, tapering abruptly to a sharp point at either end; some of the hairs are flat, others have the edges turned over so that the cross section forms the segment of a circle. The claws are long and straight: these and the hairy nose and other peculiarities of the genus are well described by Mr. F. W. True (Proc. Nat. Mus. Washington, 1892, vol. xv. p. 460), in his description of *Mus aquilus*, which no doubt should be referred to this genus. I should like also to suggest that Mr. True's name should be altered to *aquila*, as it was derived from the fact of the specimen having been killed by a bird of the eagle tribe. I may mention that there is in the British Museum a specimen which seems to agree with the

description of *Mus aquilus*: this is a smaller animal, freckled with light tips to the hairs, and is otherwise very distinct from the animal now under notice, but shows that Mr. True's specimen was about full-grown, and that the tail was not materially shortened by the injury mentioned.

Dr. Ansorge has been hitherto known in connection with zoology as a collector of insects, but he gives me an interesting account of the accident which put him in possession of this collection of mammals. The site of a long disused village had been purchased for the purpose of building the new Government Medical Hospital, and in clearing the long grass and scrub in the usual manner of surrounding it and burning towards the centre, as the circle narrowed it was discovered that there were a large number of small mammals enclosed. It being observed that there were "rats of all colours," a selection of pairs of different sorts was made, with the result that some ten or a dozen specimens were obtained. Dr. Ansorge describes the *Rhizomys* heaving up the ground like giant moles; many of the new *Lophuromys*, quite twenty, were left on the ground.

The two specimens agree in every particular and are said to be male and female, but are not labelled.

The other species represented in the collection are *Rhizomys splendens*, Rüpp., *Gerbillus afer*, Gray, *Mus (Isomys) abyssinicus*, Rüpp., and *Mus (Leggada) minutoides*, Peters.

June 2, 1896.

F. DUCANE GODMAN, Esq., F.R.S., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Secretary read the following report on the additions to the Society's Menagerie during the month of May:—

The registered additions to the Society's Menagerie during the month of May were 154 in number. Of these 52 were acquired by presentation, 62 by purchase, 14 by exchange, 4 were born in the Gardens, and 22 were received on deposit. The total number of departures during the same period, by death and removals, was 86.

Amongst the additions the following are worthy of special notice:—

1. A Red-naped Fruit-Bat (*Pteropus funereus*), purchased May 1st. This Australian animal is new to the Society's list.

2. Four examples of a Tortoise belonging to the group of Gigantic Tortoises, deposited by the Hon. Walter Rothschild, F.Z.S., May 26th. These Tortoises are believed to be referable to Daudin's Tortoise (*Testudo daudini*), from the Aldabra Islands, which is a species peculiar for the form of its carapace, the two anterior and the two posterior marginal plates being strongly reverted (see Günther, 'Gigantic Land-Tortoises,' p. 33, pl. 5).



J. Smit del. et lith.

Mintern Bros. imp.

LOPHUROMYS ANSORGEI.



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