
ON A REMARKABLE MOUNTAIN VISCACHA

FROM SOUTHERN PATAGONIA

BY

Oldfield Thomas, F. Z. S.

(British Mus. Nat. History)

The British Museum owes to its generous and indefatigable contributor, Mr. J. A. Wolffsohn, C. M. Z. S., three examples of a fine *Viscaccia* (*) from a locality *far south* of any place where members of this group have been previously recorded. The animal is quite distinct from any hitherto known, and I propose to name it in honour of its donor, to whom the Museum is indebted for series of all the mammals of Central Chili.

Viscaccia Wolffsohni, sp. n.

A large species with long fur strongly suffused with orange; tail very bushy.

Size large, form stout and robust, the size appearing even larger than the truth owing to the very long rich fur, of which the wool-hairs are over 35 mm. in length and the long hairs upwards of 50 mm. General colour above of head and body approaching clay-colour (Rigdway), though brighter and clearer; the wool hairs, which give the predominating colour, brownish slaty for four-fifths their length, their ends creamy buff darkening to clay-colour. Below, on the lower cheeks, throat, chest, and belly, the terminal colour becomes richer and redder,

(*) In his paper on the nomenclature of this group, Dr. F. Lahille, (An. Soc. Cient. Argent., LXII, p. 39, 1906) seems to have come to quite correct conclusions, including the allocation of *Viscaccia* to the Mountain Viscachas, formerly known as *Lagidium*. But with the fate that has as yet always befallen writers on this most difficult and complicated subject, he has made a mistake in crediting the name *Viscaccia* to Molina, for although the latter did say in 1810 that the animal ought to have a special generic name, he did not give it one, only using *Viscaccia* in such a way that it cannot be distinguished from the term *Viscaccia* in a technically valid manner, with «*Lepus chilensis*» at its type, choosable as such whether by elimination or by the first species rule.

attaining almost to «tawny». A distinct white spot on each axilla and on each side of the inguinal region. Dorsal dark line little marked. Head like back. Ears comparatively short, thickly and closely haired, their backs black, their inner surfaces with whitish hairs, and there is a marked line of creamy-tipped hairs running across their bases above. Arms with tawny-tipped hairs, the tawny or yellowish colour extending to the tips of the toes. Hind limbs duller, more brownish clay-colour; the feet very large and heavy. Tail far finer than in any other form, immensely bushy, the hairs of its dorsal crest attaining over 150 mm.; in colour the upper crested side is mixed black and buff or ochraceous buff; underside black, finely grizzled with glossy ochraceous buff.

Skull comparatively large and heavy; nasals expanded in front; palatal foramina rather short; bullae not so much swollen as usual.

Dimensions of the type (measured in the flesh):

Head and body 470 mm; tail 305; hind foot 107; ear 65.

Skull: greatest length 91; basilar length 75,5; zygomatic breadth 50; breadth of brain-case on parietal bones 34,2; length of upper tooth series (crowns) 22.

Hab.—Sierra de los Baguales i de las Vizcachas, lat. 50°50' S., long. 72°20' W., on the boundary between Chili and Argentina.

Type.—Adult female. B. M. n.º 7-4-5-6. Original number 277. Collected 1 st. February, 1907, by Mr. John A. Wolffsohn. Three specimens.

In the interesting account which Mr. Wolffsohn has sent me of the capture of these specimens, he states that:

«Mr. Ferrier, who owns a farm in that district, at the foot of Mount Payne, says that the Sierra de los Baguales is known to be the most southern part in which Vizcachas occur, and between that range and much farther north there are none at all...».

The species is readily distinguishable from all other members of the genus by its large size, rich colour, long fur, immensely bushy tail, and short black ears.

With characteristic modesty Mr. Wolffsohn has suggested that the species should be named after Mr. McClelland, the President of his Company, to whom he owed the pleasure of his trip to Patagonia, but in view of the immense amount of help we have received from Mr. Wolffsohn, I have ventured to disregard his request, and to name this fine animal after him.

