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Department of Mammals: Annual Report 1896 - 1897

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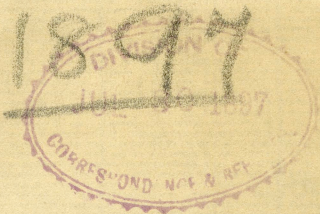
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MAMMALS - 1897

Reviewed



1. How has the fiscal year ending June 30, 1897, compared with the previous year, as far as (a) the number of accessions and (b) their scientific value are concerned?

The year 1897 does not compare favorably with preceding years in the number and value of accessions. No important new sources of increment have been developed and, for reasons which will be given in the following pages, the Curator has been unable to follow up the old leads closely.

It seems clear that more money is necessary for the acquisition of material.

2. Name, in the order of their importance, the accessions of the year which deserve special notice, and state in each case whether given, lent, received in exchange or purchased.

(1) An excellent general collection from Lower Spain comprising 165 specimens, presented by Dr. W. L. Abbott, to whom the Museum is already indebted for much valuable material.

(2) Two skins of the Mt. St. Elias bear were purchased from Hart & Co. of New York.

(3) Dr. E. A. Mearns, U. S. A. presented valuable collections from the Catskill Mts., and from the vicinity of the District of Columbia, amounting in all to 385 specimens.

(4) An excellent series of lemurs and other Madagascar mammals were purchased from Rev. James Wills. They comprise both skins and skeletons.

(5) Toward the close of the year two specimens of the recently-described Pygmy African Flying-squirrel, genus Idiurus, were obtained from Wm. B. Filer. They are from Efulem, Kameroun District, and appear to represent a new species.

(6) A number of skins of the larger lemurs, previously wanting in the collection were purchased from Ward's Natural Science Establishment.

(7) Three skeletons and a skull of the southern Blackfish, Globocephala brachyptera were purchased from Florida.

(8) The Kent Scientific Institute, Grand Rapids, Mich., through Mr. C. A. Whittemore, Curator, loaned for study a young specimen of the very rare Bassaricyon gabbi, from Honduras.

Add Ans (6)

3. Indicate briefly the present condition of the exhibition series and the study series.

(1) Exhibition-series. The exhibition-series has remained practically unchanged during the year. A number of antlers of wapiti and caribou were hung on the walls. The specimens in the cases are already very much crowded and little could be done to improve the general appearance, while it has seemed undesirable to add to the series by fresh mounted skins. The series is still much in need of labelling.

This is especially true of the foreign mammals of which there are but few specimens for comparison in the study-series. The identification of the mounted skins is rendered difficult for that reason. The American series largely needs re-labelling, on account of the great recent changes in nomenclature. The Curator has not found time for this work during the year.

(2.) The study-series. This series is in fair order, but could be rendered more accessible if more cases and space to arrange them side by side could be provided.

At present it is impossible to carry anything like a natural sequence from case to case.

More storage-cases are needed from the largest-sized mammals, many specimens of which are now exposed to dust.

The arrangement of the collection of medium-sized skulls in boxes has progressed ~~fast~~ but not been finished.

The alcoholic collection has been considerably worked over and the smaller species are in fair order.

There are still many jars of the larger forms, rabbits, weasels, and the like which need overhauling. The storage-shelves for these will need to be reconstructed before a proper arrangement can be made.

4. State what progress has been made in administering upon the collections under your charge.

This has perhaps been sufficiently answered under the preceding head. It should be remarked here that, on account of the death of the Assistant Secretary, the Curator's time from Sept 6th was almost exclusively occupied by the general executive work of the Museum. For this reason, ^{no} new lines of work could be taken up. The Department was entirely without a regular force at times, and has had no officer higher than an Awt regularly on duty during the year. About all that it has been possible to accomplish under these adverse circumstances, has been to preserve the collections intact and to prevent the routine work from falling behind.

Early in the calendar year 1897 preparations were begun for an exhibit at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition at Nashville. The exhibit as finally installed consisted of a group of Proboscis Monkeys, a group of Gibbons, and two unit cases of mounted specimens of Lemurs.

5. What special investigations have you commenced, continued, or completed, upon material under your care, during the year?

Work on a monograph on revision of the American Mole was finished during the year and the results published in the 19th volume of the Proceedings, paper no. 1101.

Work on deer antlers was necessarily suspended in September. The manuscript for a paper on this subject, to be published in the Report, is in an advanced stage and many illustrations have been prepared.

I have also taken up the work of ascertaining the proper nomenclature for the whalebone whales -

6. What explorations (a) by members of the Museum staff, and (b) under other auspices, have resulted in enriching the collections under your care?

Mr. W^m. Palmer has sent in to the Department during the year 52 mammals of various small species, collected chiefly from the District of Columbia and vicinity, but one collection was made in the Disposal Swamp, Virginia - Mr. D. W. Reuther, jr., temporary Aid in the Dept also collected 16 mammals in the latter locality for the Museum.

Nine Fur-seal skulls were collected by Dr. Stejneger, Curator of Reptiles, and Mr. F. A. Lucas, Curator of Comp. Anatomy, obtained 12 skulls of the same animal on the Prybilof Id.

Six other members of the staff have contributed from one to four specimens each.

7. What material from your department has been transmitted to students and investigators outside of the Museum during the year, and in connection with what special investigation was the material needed? It should be stated in each case whether or not the material has been returned to the Museum.

- (a.) Two bats sent to D^r. Harrison Allen of Philadelphia for use in his studies of the Chiroptera. (Returned)
- (b.) To D^r. J. A. Allen, American Museum of Nat. Hist., New York, the following: 4 Sciurus carolinensis yucatanensis, 6 Heteromys, 1 Rethrodontomys, 16 Sigmodon, & the type of Oryzomys talamancae (Returned) - These were used in his papers on the mammals of Central America published in the Bull. Amer. Mus.
- (c.) To D^r. Theo. Gill, Washington was sent one Bassariscus for study. (Returned)
- (d.) D^r. C. Hart Merriam, Chief Biol. Survey, Dept. of Agric., Washington, received the following: Type of Bassariscus raptor (See Proc. Biol. Soc. Washin^g), 12 Coyotes, Canis latrans, etc., (See ditto, xi, p. 30), types of 5 species of Microtus & 4 other specimens of the same genus, 1 Scapanus, 4 skulls of Arctcephalus. (Returned)
- (e.) To Mr. G. S. Miller, jr. the following: 36 bats (for use in connection with a monograph of the genus Vesperugo), the type of Atapha telioles, the type of Phenacomys truei (See Proc. Biol. Soc. Washin^g, 1897, p. 81) 1 Microtus, 1 Micromys, 1 bat, Rhogeessa (made type of new species, See ditto, p. 139). (Returned)
- (f.) To Mr. E. W. Nelson, Dept. of Agric. :- 12 skins & skulls of shrews. (Returned)
- (g.) To Mr. S. W. Rhoads, Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila. :- 11 East African mammals - Abbott Coll. (See Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci., 189-, p. 577), 40 skins of flying-squirrels, Sciuropterus. (Returned)

8. Give the names of any persons who have prosecuted investigations in your department during the year, and state the special aim of their studies.

Dr. E. A. Mearns, U.S.A. has continued his studies on the mammals collected during the Mexican Boundary survey. He has already published several preliminary papers in the Proceedings of the Museum, and it is intended that a general treatise on the vertebrate animals of the Boundary be published later as a Bulletin.

9. Give a list of persons, other than contributors, who during the year have aided your department by their assistance and advice; and indicate briefly the nature of their services.

The Department has had the valuable assistance of W. E. A. Mearns, U.S.A. on technical matters from day to day at such times as the Curator could not give personal attention to details.

Mr. D. W. Prentiss, jr. has rendered volunteer assistance in connection with the routine work of the office at times when he was not regularly on the staff.

Mammals

11. Give a list of the new genera and subgenera, species and subspecies described in the papers referred to in the answer to question 10 (e.g., *Gonodela rhabdophora*, W.J. Holland, (Lep.) Masai Land, Africa. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus., XVIII, No. 1062, May 27, 1896, p. 256, pl. VIII, fig. 5). If the type specimen is not in the National Museum, that fact should be indicated by the use of an asterisk.

Scapanus orarius, F.W. True. (Mamm.) Shoalwater Bay, Wash. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. XIX, no. 1101, Dec. 21, 1896, p. 56, pl. I, fig. 8, pl. II, fig. 8, pl. III, fig. 9.

Lynx rufus eremicus, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) New River, Cal. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. XX, no. 1126, adv. sheet, Jan. 12, 1897, p. [1]. *advance edition.*

Repeat in Bull

Lynx rufus californicus, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) San Diego, Cal. Ditto, p. 2

Urocyon cinereoargenteus texensis, new subsp., E.A. Mearns, (Mamm.) San Pedro, near Eagle Pass, Tex. Ditto, p. 2.

Urocyon cinereoargenteus californicus, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) Riverside Co., Cal. Ditto, p. 3.

Spilogale ambigua, new sp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) Eagle Mts., Chihuahua, Mex. Ditto, p. 3.

Mephitis occidentalis holzneri, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) San Isidro Ranch, Lower Cal. Ditto, p. 4.

Mephitis milleri, new sp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) Ft. Lowell, Ariz. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. XX, no. 1129, adv. sheet, Feb. 11, 1897, p. 1. *Advance edition.*

Dorcylaphus crooki, new sp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) Grant Co., New Mex. Ditto, p. 2.

Dicotyles angulatus sonoriensis, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) San Bernardino River, Mex. Ditto, p. 3.

Dorcylaphus hemionus eremicus, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) Sierra Seri, Mex. Ditto, p. 4.

Sciurus fessor anthonyi, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) San Diego Co., Cal. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. XX, no. 1132, adv. sheet, Feb. 5, 1897, p. 1.

Castor canadensis frondator, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) San Pedro River, Sonora, Mex. Ditto, p. 2.

Neotoma cumulator, new sp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) Ft. Yuma, Cal. Ditto, p. 3.

Sigmodon hispidus pallidus, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) El Paso, Tex. Ditto, p. 4.

Sigmodon hispidus eremicus, new subsp., E.A. Mearns. (Mamm.) Cenega Well, 30 miles S. of Monument 204, Mex. Boundary Colo. River, Sonora, Mex. Ditto, p. 4.

12. Please present any plans which you have in view for the development of your department.

My plans have not changed materially since the last report.

13.

- (a) Give the number of specimens received during the year. (This number should include deposits, and all other specimens received, regardless of their final disposition.)
- (b) Give the total number of specimens in your custody, after making allowance for deductions through waste material, exchanges and distributions.
- (c) Give the number of the last entries in your catalogue on June 30, 1896, and June 30, 1897.

(c) Regular series:

First entry, July 3, 1896, — 82675. ¹⁰¹⁰

Last entry, June 30, 1897. — 83685.

Dept. of Agric. Deposit:

First entry July 1-1896, — 78474 ¹⁰⁰⁶⁷

Last entry June 30-1897, — 88541

Total number of specimens
in the collection June 30-1896, — 15,215

Increase, fiscal 1896-'97, — 1,011 ¹⁰⁰⁸

Distributed, — $\frac{3}{1008}$