

## HYPSIPRYMNUS APICALIS, Gould.

### Tasmanian Rat-Kangaroo.

EVER since my visit to Australia I have been induced to consider the animal here figured, which is a native of Van Diemen's Land, to be distinct from the species known as the *Potoroo* or Kangaroo-Rat of "White's Journal," (*Potoroüs murinus*, Desm.), which inhabits New South Wales; it has not been an examination of dried skins which has induced this opinion, but abundant opportunities for observing the animal in a state of nature. Mr. Waterhouse, although he has made them identical, evidently had some doubt on the subject, since, when figuring the skull of the Van Diemen's Land animal, in comparison with that of the one from New South Wales, he places a note of interrogation after the name he has given to the former. I must admit that they are very closely allied, at the same time I find peculiar and well-marked characters by which they may each be distinguished from the other. The Tasmanian animal is always nearly a third larger in size, and has the tip of its tail white, a feature I have never seen in any other of the three species inhabiting the continent of Australia.

The *Hypsiprymnus apicalis* is very generally, I may say universally, dispersed over Van Diemen's Land; and I seldom failed to find it in low damp situations clothed with dense herbage: during the daytime it lies coiled up in its nest among the herbage in a depression of the ground; a very little noise near its retreat is, however, sufficient to disturb its repose, and cause it to dart away with rabbit-like rapidity to a place of security: it can seldom be induced to break covert into the open space, and if sharply pressed, invariably takes to the shelter of a large tree or stone, which everywhere abound; its food consists of roots, herbage, and the bark and leaves of trees. I must not omit to remark, that in no instance have I known dogs to partake of the flesh of this species either raw or dressed; while that of the members of the genus *Bettongia* is seldom refused. Mr. Richter has made so correct a drawing of this animal from life, and has so well represented in the reduced figures two of the positions frequently assumed by it, that a glance at the Plate will give more information on this point than any description.

The fur is long and of a dark hue; on the upper parts of the body it is of a dusky brown, a general tint produced by the admixture of brown and pale brownish yellow, the visible portion of the longer and coarser hairs being black, and that of the shorter fur of a pale yellow hue; the under surface of the body is of a dirty yellowish white or pale buff tint, with the fur of those parts as well as that of the back of a deepish grey colour next the skin; the ears are clothed internally with dirty white hairs, and externally with hairs of the same colour as the rest of the head; the feet are brown; the tail is of a darker hue than the body, and is tipped for about an inch with pure white; the muzzle is not only naked in front, but a narrow naked space continues upward towards the forehead.

The front figure represents the animal of the natural size.