

OSPHRANTER RUFUS.

Great Red Kangaroo.

- Kangurus rufus*, Desm. Mamm. Supp., p. 541.—Gray, in Griff. Anim. Kingd., vol. v. p. 202.
——— *laniger*, Gaim. Bull. des Sci. par la Soc. Philom., année 1822, p. 138.—Quoy et Gaim. Voy. de l'Uranie, p. 65. pl. 9.
Macropus lanigerus, Gray, in Griff. Anim. Kingd., vol. iii. p. 49. pl. opposite p. 48.
——— *laniger*, G. Benn. Cat. of Australian Museum, Sydney, p. 6. no. 28.—Gould, Mon. of Macropodidæ.
——— Gray, List of Mamm. in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 88.
——— (*Halmaturus*) *rufus*, Waterh. Nat. Hist. Mamm., vol. i. p. 104.
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Not only is this species the most beautiful member of the family to which it belongs, but it may also be regarded as the finest of the indigenous Mammals of Australia yet discovered; its large size, great elegance of form, and rich and conspicuous colouring all tending to warrant such an opinion. A splendid male, which in health and colour fully equals any examples I have personally observed in their native wilds, is now (1853) living in the Gardens of the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park, and, although it has not yet attained the stature of a fully adult animal, forms an object of great attraction to the visitors, and particularly to those naturalists who take an interest in the singular Mammals of Australia. This fine example is the first that I have seen alive in Europe; and it will be much to be regretted if a female cannot be procured, for in all probability the success which has attended the introduction of the Common Kangaroo and other members of the family would also wait upon the domestication of this noble animal, and ultimately lead to the perpetuation of its race in Europe; an object of the highest importance, since from the limited extent of its native habitat, daily encroached upon by civilized man, and the wanton manner in which it is unrelentingly killed, it is constantly becoming more and more scarce in the open plains and low grassy hills of its native land. The kind of country it frequents being of the utmost value to the pastoral portion of the Australian community, it is diligently sought for and occupied as soon as found, for depasturing their immense flocks and herds, in the stockmen and keepers of which, aided by their fleet, powerful, and well-trained dogs, the Red Kangaroo finds an enemy which at once drives it from all newly occupied districts, and which will ultimately lead to its entire extirpation, unless some law be enacted for its preservation; and to this point I would direct the attention of the present enlightened Governor and Assembly of New South Wales, who surely will not hesitate to make some provision for the protection of this noble animal, as well as for some other fine species of the family still inhabiting that Colony; in fact, if this be not done, a few years will see them expunged from the Fauna of Australia.

The range of the Great Red Kangaroo, so far as it is yet known, extends over the plains of the interior of the Colonies of New South Wales, Port Philip, and South Australia; I have never seen a specimen from the country to the westward of the latter colony, or from the northward of the latitude of Moreton Bay; the plains bordering the rivers Gwydyr, Namoi, Morumbidgee, Darling and Murray, and the grassy hills of South Australia, particularly those to the northward of Adelaide, are the districts over which it formerly ranged in abundance, and in which, notwithstanding the persecution to which it has been subjected, it may still be found, though in much smaller numbers. It does not so strictly affect the rich grassy plains as the Common Kangaroo (*Macropus major*), but evinces a greater partiality for the sides of the low stony hills and patches of hard ground clothed with box, intersecting those alluvial flats. In this part of its economy, as well as in the structure of its hinder feet, the greater length of its arms, the comparative nakedness of its muzzle, and in the much smaller size of the female compared with the females of the true *Macropi*, and in the difference in the colouring of the sexes, it is most intimately allied to the Great Rock Walleroos, to which I have given the generic name of *Osphranter*, and hence I have been induced to associate it with the members of that genus, and to call it *Osphranter rufus*, which latter or specific name has the priority over that of *laniger* assigned to it by M. Gaimard, and under which it appears in my "Monograph of the Macropodidæ." It is to be regretted that the colouring of the fur of this fine animal cannot by any means be preserved after death if exposed to light; nothing can be more different than its colour on the living animal and that of the mounted specimens in the National Museum, which were procured by myself while in Australia; so great in fact is the difference, that they might readily be mistaken for two different animals. The beautiful pink hue of the throat and chest appears to be due to some peculiar exudation from the skin rather than to the colouring of the hair itself; for if those parts be rubbed with a white handkerchief, a pinky pollen-like substance will be found adhering to it: this tint is deeper at some seasons than at others, and is probably developed under some particular condition of the animal.

The female is still more gracefully and elegantly formed than the male, and has a very different style of