THYLACINUS CYNOCEPHALUS.

Thylacinus.

Didelphis cynocephala, Harris, Trans. Linn. Soc., vol. ix. p. 174. pl. 19. Dasyurus cynocephalus, Geoff. Ann. du Mus., tom. xv. p. 304.

Thylacinus cynocephalus, Fisch. Syn. Mamm., p. 270.—Wagn. in Schreb. Saug. Supp., 109-110 Heft, p. 19.— Waterh. Nat. Lib. (Marsupialia), vol. xi. p. 123. pl. 5.—Ib. Nat. Hist. Mamm., vol. i. p. 456. pl. 16. fig. 2.

Thylacinus Harrisii, Temm. Mon. de Mamm., vol. i. p. 63. pl. 7. figs. 1-4. Peracyon cynocephalus, Gray, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 97. Tiger, Hyæna, Zebra-Opossum, Zebra-Wolf, and Dog-headed Opossum of the Colonists.

THE circumstance of a fine pair, male and female, of the Thylacinus cynocephalus being now living in the Gardens of the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park, enables me to give the best figure of the animal that has yet appeared; and so great is the interest which attaches to this singular species, that I have been induced to give a representation of its head of the natural size, in addition to that of the entire animal on a reduced scale. Tasmania, better known as Van Diemen's Land, is the country it inhabits, and so strictly is it confined to that island, that I believe no instance is on record of its having been found on the neighbouring continent of Australia. It must be regarded as the most formidable, both of the Marsupialia and of the indigenous mammals of Australia; for although too feeble to make a successful attack on man, it commits sad havoc among the smaller quadrupeds of the country, and among the poultry, and other domestic animals of the settler; even sheep are not secure from its attacks, which are the more difficult to be guarded against, as the habits of the animal being nocturnal, they are always made at night. The destruction it deals around has, as a matter of course, called forth the enmity of the settler, and hence in all cultivated districts the animal is nearly extirpated; on the other hand, so much of Tasmania still remains in a state of nature, and so much of its forest land yet uncleared, that an abundance of covert still remains in which the animal is secure from the attacks of man; many years must therefore elapse before it can become entirely extinct; in these remote districts it preys upon Halmaturus Billardieri and H. Bennetti, Bandicoots, Echidnæ, and all the smaller animals.

In confinement it is excessively shy, and on being alarmed dashes and leaps about its cage in the most violent manner, uttering at the same time a short guttural cry resembling a bark; but whether this sound is also emitted in a state of nature, has not been observed. Mr. Ronald C. Gunn, who has had better opportunities than any other scientific man of observing the animal in its native wilds, states that it is common in the more remote parts of the colony, and that it is often caught at Woolnooth and the Hampshire Hills. He has seen some so large and powerful, that a number of dogs would not face one of them. Its attacks on sheep are usually made by night, but it also prowls about in the day-time, when, perhaps from its im-

Mr. Harris, to whom we are indebted for our first knowledge of the animal, states that it dwells among perfect vision by day, its pace is very slow. caverns and rocks in the deep and almost impenetrable glens in the neighbourhood of the highest mountains of Van Diemen's Land. The specimen from which his description was taken, was caught in a trap baited with kangaroo's flesh; it remained alive but a few hours, having received some internal hurt while being secured; it appeared exceedingly inactive and stupid, and, like the Owl, kept almost continually moving the nictitating membrane with which the eye is furnished: the remains of an Echidna were found

In a letter lately received from Mr. Gunn by D. W. Mitchell, Esq., Sec. Zool. Soc., dated Launceston, in its stomach. Nov. 12, 1850, the following note occurs respecting the specimens in the Society's menagerie:

"I feel little doubt but that the Thylacines will do well and very probably breed; the number of young is four at a litter—at least I have seen four in the female's pouch, but there may often be fewer. They inhabit the summits of the western mountains (alt. 3500 feet), where, occasionally, snow falls for many months of the year, where the ground is sometimes covered with snow for weeks, and where frosts are severe; therefore I can imagine nothing in the climate of London likely to injure them very materially."