BELIDEUS BREVICEPS, Waterh.

Short-headed Belideus.

Petaurus (Belideus) breviceps, Waterh. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VI. p. 152.—Ib. vol. xi. Nat. Lib. (Marsupialia), p. 290. pl. 29.—Ib. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 334.

Petaurus Peronii, G. Benn. Cat. Aust. Mus., p. ? not of Desmarest.

Petaurus breviceps, Gray, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 83.

This species of *Belideus* is not so widely dispersed over New South Wales as the *B. Sciureus*; it is in fact a much more local species; judging from the great number of specimens I have seen from Port Philip, I presume that district to be its great stronghold. I have two specimens in my collection, sent by Mr. Strange, one of which is labeled Wollongong, and the other Torrumbong; the former, as is well known, is the port of the rich district of Illawarra, and I presume the latter to be the name of an adjacent locality, as both bear the date of June 9. It is a somewhat singular circumstance, that, so far as we yet know, no example of this form has been found in Southern or Western Australia, nor in Van Diemen's Land.

In general appearance this animal closely resembles the *B. Sciureus*, but differs in being of a smaller size, and in having the tail more slender and cylindrical: the head is so much shorter, that the difference is readily perceptible in the living or recent animal, and conspicuously so in the denuded crania; it is from this character that Mr. Waterhouse assigned to it the specific name of *breviceps*.

In its habits and general economy there is no marked difference from those of *B. Sciureus*; like that species, it secretes itself in the hollows of trees, and sallies forth in search of food on the approach of evening, when it becomes exceedingly active, and readily transports itself from tree to tree by means of the expanding membrane attached to the sides and limbs.

The accompanying drawing was made from living examples in the possession of Mr. Harrington which had bred and reared two young ones, either in London or during their passage to this country.

In a state of nature its food consists of the tender buds of trees and flowers, honey, and insects; in captivity, bread and milk sweetened with sugar forms an excellent substitute for its natural food.

Fur soft; upper surface ashy grey; a dusky longitudinal line extends from between the eyes along the back until lost in the general hue of the rump; tail dusky grey, rather more than two inches of its apical portion black; flank-membrane blackish above, white on the edge, this white fringe extending along the hinder part of the arm to the tip of the little finger; upper surface of the arm sooty black; a dusky mark along the outer side of the legs; under surface white, greyish white or greyish buff; ears black at the base, white at the posterior angles.

The figures are of the natural size.