

CUSCUS BREVICAUDATUS, Gray.

Short-tailed Cuscus.

Phalangista (Pseudocheirus) nudicaudata, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc. 1849, p. 110.

Cuscus brevicaudatus, Gray in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxvi. p. 102.—Ib. Cat. of Mamm. and Birds of New Guinea in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 7.

Pseudocheirus nudicaudata, Macg. Voy. of H.M.S. Rattlesnake, vol. i. p. 129.

THAT a member of the genus *Cuscus* should be found in the extreme north-east of the Australian continent is not surprising, from the contiguity of New Guinea and the adjacent islands, where various members of the genus abound. It will be seen, by the synonyms given above, that when I described this animal, I regarded it as a *Phalangista*, and gave it the name of *Phalangista (Pseudocheirus) nudicaudata*; now, as all the *Cusci* have the extremity of the tail denuded of hairs, this specific appellation is certainly inappropriate, and I have therefore adopted that of *brevicaudatus*, proposed for it by Dr. Gray.

When speaking of the objects observed near Port Albany, Mr. Macgillivray says,—“The natives one day brought down to us a live Opossum, quite tame and very gentle. It turned out to be a new species, and has since been described by Mr. Gould under the name of *Pseudocheirus nudicaudatus* ;” and this, unfortunately, is all we know of the natural history of this pretty animal.

Dr. Gray, in his “Observations on the Genus *Cuscus*,” published in the ‘Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London’ for the year 1858, says,—“This species” (the *Cuscus brevicaudatus*) “is very like the ashy variety of *Cuscus maculatus*, but the front lower cutting-teeth are much broader, and the tail is considerably shorter than any of the specimens of the *C. maculatus* contained in the British Museum collection.

“The light mark on the rump is common to all the species of *Cuscus*, and is probably produced by the habit of the animal sitting on that part of the body, rolled up into a ball, on the fork of the branches of a tree.”

Head, all the upper surface, the sides of the body, and the outer sides of the limbs brownish grey; the tips of the hairs with a silky appearance; under surface of the neck and body and the inner sides of the limbs pale buff; the colouring of the upper and under surface distinctly defined on the sides of the body, but gradually blending on the limbs, the rump, and root of the tail, which is thickly clothed on its basal third, and naked for the remainder of its length; hands, feet, and naked portion of the tail pinky flesh-colour.

	inches.
Length from tip of nose to root of tail	12
„ of tail	8
„ of fore-feet, including the nails	3
„ of hind-feet, including the nails	3½

The animal is figured in two positions, of the size of life; at the same time, it must be mentioned that it is believed to be immature, and not more than two-thirds of the size it would be when adult.