

PHASCOLARCTOS CINEREUS.

Koala.

Lipurus cinereus, Goldf. in Oken's Isis, 1819, p. 271.

Phascolarctos fuscus, Desm. Mammalogie, p. 276.—Ib. Dict. des Sci. Nat., tom. xxxix. p. 448.—Wallich in Jard. Nat. Lib., Marsupialia, p. 295.

———— *Flindersi*, Less. Man. de Mamm., p. 221.

———— *fuscus et cinereus*, Fisch. Syn. Mamm., p. 285.—Wagn. Schreb. Saugth., 111-112 Heft, p. 92.

———— *cinereus*, List of Mamm. in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 87.

Koala Wombat, Home, Phil. Trans. 1808, p. 304.

Le Koala ou Colak, Desm. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xvii. p. 110. tab. E. 22. fig. 4.

Wombat of Flinders, Knox in Edinb. New Phil. Journ. 1826, p. 111.

Phascolarctus cinereus, Waterh. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 259.—Gray, Ann. Phil. 1821.

New Holland Sloth, Perry, Arcana, t.

Native Bear and *Native Sloth* of the Colonists.

DURING my two years' ramble in Australia, a portion of my time and attention was directed to the fauna of the dense and luxuriant brushes which stretch along the south-eastern coast, from Illawarra to Moreton Bay. I also spent some time among the cedar brushes of the mountain ranges of the interior, particularly those bordering the well-known Liverpool Plains. In all these localities the Koala is to be found, and although nowhere very abundant, a pair, with sometimes the addition of a single young one, may, if diligently sought for, be procured in every forest. It is very recluse in its habits, and, without the aid of the natives, its presence among the thick foliage of the great *Eucalypti* can rarely be detected. During the daytime it is so slothful that it is very difficult to arouse and make it quit its resting-place. Those that fell to my own gun were most tenacious of life, clinging to the branches until the last spark had fled. However difficult it may be for the European to discover them in their shady retreats, the quick and practised eye of the aborigine readily detects them, and they speedily fall victims to the heavy and powerful clubs which are hurled at them with the utmost precision. These children of nature eat its flesh, after cooking it in the same manner as they do that of the Opossum and the other brush animals.

I believe the Koala to be extremely local in its habitat, as up to the present time the south-eastern portion of the continent of Australia is the only part in which it is known to exist.

No difference occurs in the external appearance of the sexes.

An excellent account of the habits of this animal was given in the "Philosophical Transactions" for 1808, by Colonel Patterson, formerly Governor of New South Wales. It was known to this gentleman as an inhabitant of the forests about fifty or sixty miles to the south-west of Port Jackson, whence, it is stated, the first specimens were brought. "The New Hollanders," says Colonel Patterson, "eat the flesh of this animal, and therefore readily join in the pursuit of it: they examine with wonderful rapidity and minuteness the branches of the loftiest gum-trees, and, upon discovering a Koala, they climb the tree with as much ease and expedition as a European would mount a tolerably high ladder. Having reached the branches, which are sometimes 40 or 50 feet from the ground, they follow the animal to the extremity of a bough, and either kill it with a tomahawk or take it alive. The Koala feeds upon the tender shoots of the blue gum-tree, being more particularly fond of this than of any other food; it rests during the day on the tops of these trees, feeding at ease or sleeping. In the night it descends and prowls about, scratching up the ground in search of some particular roots; it seems to creep rather than walk: when incensed or angry, it utters a long shrill yell, and assumes a fierce and menacing look. They are found in pairs, and the young is carried by the mother on her shoulders. This animal appears soon to form an attachment to the person who feeds it."

"It has been frequently compared to a bear in its movements and mode of climbing," observes Mr. Waterhouse, "and, indeed, in appearance the animal is not unlike a small bear."

Mr. Waterhouse has given so correct a description of this animal in his "Natural History of the Mammalia," that I cannot perhaps do better than transcribe it into these pages:—

"The Koala is usually about 2 feet in length, and when on all-fours stands 10 or 11 inches in height; the girth of the body is about 18 inches. Its limbs are of moderate length, and powerful; the hands and feet large, and admirably adapted by their structure to tree-climbing habits. The toes of the fore feet are so arranged, that the two innermost of the five are opposed to the other three; and all the toes,