PERAMELES MYOSURUS, *Wagn.*

Saddle-backed Perameles.

Perameles myosurus, Wagn. in Wiegm. Archiv, 7th Year, p. 289; and Schreb. Saugth., pl. 155 A.d., Part 111-112, Nov. 1842.
Perameles arenaria, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part XII. p. 104.
Mäl-a, Aborigines of the York and Toodyay districts.
Nyĕm-mel, Aborigines of King George's Sound.

Having lately had an opportunity of consulting Schreber's "Saugthiere," I find therein the figure of an animal so nearly resembling my *Perameles arenaria*, that I am induced to believe it to be the same species; I have consequently, in justice to the first describer, Dr. Wagner, placed my own name as a synonym to his.

Dr. Wagner, whose labours display great care and no ordinary extent of information, has very accurately pointed out the distinctions between it and the *P. fasciata*, the most nearly allied species yet discovered; but as he has not mentioned the habitat of the animal he has described, I am unable to come to a positive conclusion on the subject: if it be from Western Australia, it is doubtless identical with the one here figured.

The present animal inhabits the whole line of coast of the Swan River colony, but, so far as I can learn, is not found to the westward of the Darling range of hills. It resides in the densest scrub, thickets of the seedling *Casuarinæ* being its favourite resort. It makes a compact nest in a hollow on the ground, of grasses and other materials, which assimilate so closely in colour and appearance to the surrounding herbage, that it is very difficult of detection, the difficulty being much increased by there being no visible opening for the ingress and egress of the animals. The nest is generally inhabited by pairs. The young are either three or four in number.

Its food consists of insects, seeds and grain. It excavates holes in the earth with rapidity and ease, and to these and the hollow trunks of fallen trees it flies for shelter when pursued by its natural enemies.

Mr. Gilbert remarks that this species is, without exception, the most difficult to skin of all the marsupials with which he is acquainted; the skin in fact is so tender, that the weight of one of the limbs, if left hanging by the skin, is sufficient to separate it from the body; and living specimens are often met with minus a portion or the whole of the tail.

The sexes are alike in colour, but when adult the female is smaller than the male. Examples are frequently seen of all sizes, which appears to be solely occasioned by a difference of age.

The fur is harsh to the touch, and of a greyish brown hue, interspersed with numerous long black hairs, which form a broad indistinct band across the flanks immediately above the hind-legs, and a kind of saddle-like mark on the centre of the back; ears of three colours, rusty red near the base, then dark brown, and the apex of a light greyish brown; sides of the muzzle and all the under surface buffy white; line along the upper surface of the tail dark brown, the remainder buffy white; outside of the fore-legs brownish grey; feet and claws buffy white.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size. The flowering plant is a species of *Melaleuca*, probably undescribed.