ECHIDNA SETOSA, Cuv.

Hairy Echidna.

Echidna setosa, Cuv. Règne Anim., Edit. 1817, tom. i. p. 226; Nouv. Edit., tom. i. p. 235.—Waterh. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 47.—Geoff. Bull. Soc. Phil., tom. iii t. 15.—Gray, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 192.

Echidna breviaculeata, Tiedemann, Zoologie, tom. i. p. 592. Tachyglossus setosus, Ill. Schreb. t. 63.

Whether there be one or two species of the present genus is a question on which the opinions of zoologists are divided, but in either case it becomes necessary that animals exhibiting so great a difference as do the Echidnas from New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, should each be figured in a work on the Mammals of Australia. No instance has come under my notice of the Hairy Echidna or the animal here figured having occurred on the continent of Australia, while in Van Diemen's Land it is very common. I am aware that the hairy covering has been considered indicative of youth, and also as due to the colder climate of Van Diemen's Land; nevertheless I have not failed to remark, that not only is the animal generally speaking of larger size, but the spines are shorter and more slender; it is however, I admit, a matter still wrapped in uncertainty, and one which I would recommend to the attention of zoologists resident in Australia, since it is by their observations that the doubt is most likely to be cleared up.

The *Echidna setosa* is universally dispersed over the sandy districts of Van Diemen's Land, and so common is it in the neighbourhood of Hobart Town, that living specimens are frequently brought in and exhibited for sale, the usual price being half-a-crown. Several examples kept by me for some time during my residence there, ran about the room in which I was engaged without exhibiting any signs of alarm; at the same time they appeared impatient of restraint, and made many attempts to escape; but that it might to a certain degree be domesticated or trained to bear captivity, is proved by several examples having lately been brought alive to this country, which unfortunately did not long survive.

Like the other species, it feeds upon ants and other insects, which it procures by protruding and retracting the tongue, covered with a thick glutinous fluid; in captivity sopped bread and milk forms an agreeable substitute for its natural food.

General colour brown; all the upper surface of the body thickly beset with pale yellowish spines tipped with black; the fur on the back dark brown, and so dense and lengthened as nearly to hide the spines; eye brown; snout slate-colour; tongue and soles of the feet pink; claws blackish brown.

"The *E. setosa*," says Mr. Waterhouse, "is subject to some slight variation in tint, as well as in texture of the fur; the spines also vary slightly, being rather longer in some specimens than others; yet the differences observable in individuals are not such as to render it difficult to distinguish the *E. setosa* from the *E. hystrix*;" and he adds, that he suspects the more hairy clothing of this animal may be due to the comparatively humid climate of Van Diemen's Land, which may have had the effect of causing the fur to become longer and more dense; and if so, the increased development of the fur would in all probability affect the growth of the spines, by robbing them of their nutriment.

The figures are of the natural size.