

HALMATURUS BENNETTII.

Bennett's Wallaby.

Spec. Char.—*Halm. pilis subspinosus, corpore suprà fusciscenti-cinereo, clunibus, et regione circum-oculari, rufo-brunneis; corpore subtùs cinerescenti-albo; rostro, auribus posticè, digitis anticis posticisque nigris; lineâ albescente vix distinctâ ab angulo oris, ad genas excurrente; caudâ cinerescente, ad apicem nigrâ, et subtùs sordide flavescenti-albâ.*

Descr.—Fur rather long and moderately soft; general tint a very deep gray, inclining to black on the back; somewhat paler on the sides of the body, with a rust-like tint on the back of the neck, base of ears, the haunches, shoulders, and in the region of the eye; under surface of the body, and the inner side and fore part of the hinder legs, grayish white; muzzle black; crown of the head brownish black; an obscure whitish line extends backwards from the corners of the mouth, and becomes obliterated on the cheeks; lips dirty white; chin blackish; ears white internally, black externally; hands, toes and outer side of the heel black; hairs of the tail (excepting at the base, where they are of the same colours and character as those of the body) black, broadly annulated with white near the apex; tip of the tail black, under side of the tail white; the hairs on the upper part of the body are of a deep slate colour at the base, the remaining portion of each hair is black annulated with white, or more generally with pale rust colour; on the under parts of the body the hairs are of a deep slate colour with the apical portion white.

	Male.	
	feet.	inches.
Length from the nose to the extremity of the tail	4	2
„ of tail	2	1
„ „ tarsus and toes, including the nail		10
„ „ arm and hand, including the nails		8
„ „ face from the tip of the nose to the base of the ear		6
„ „ ear		3

Macropus Bennettii, Waterh. in Proc. of Zool. Soc. (Oct. 1837), Part V. p. 103.

Halmaturus ualabatus, Gray in Mag. of Nat. Hist., Nov. 1837, vol. i. New Series, p. 583.

Macropus (Halmaturus) fruticus, Ogilby in Ann. of Nat. Hist., May 1838, vol. i. p. 219.

Brush Kangaroo, Colonists of Van Diemen's Land.

THIS is not only the largest Wallaby with which we are yet acquainted, but it is the most important, since its flesh is very generally eaten and highly esteemed, and its skin forms a considerable article of commerce, being largely imported from Van Diemen's Land into England for the manufacture of boots and shoes, besides being extensively used for the same purpose in the colony. It is universally dispersed over Van Diemen's Land, whose dense and humid forests afford it a retreat so secure as to preclude all chance of its extermination for centuries to come, although many thousands are killed annually. Advertisements may frequently be seen in the Hobart Town newspapers, stating that three thousand skins are immediately wanted, and they are quickly supplied by the settlers, servants and shepherds at the out-stations: they are either captured by dogs or obtained by snares set in their runs; the skins are generally taken off on the spot, and are afterwards stretched on the ground to dry; they are then sold for about fourpence or sixpence each to persons who visit the stock stations of the interior for the purpose of collecting them, and who retail them again in Hobart Town or Launceston to the advertiser or others for colonial consumption or for exportation.

The Bennett's Wallaby is gregarious in its habits, and although truly a brush animal, does not confine itself so strictly to localities of that description as the smaller members of the genus; but frequently resorts to the thinly-timbered forests and the crowns of the low grassy hills, always, however, seeking security in the thick brush when pursued, or such steep rocky acclivities as present almost insurmountable obstacles to the pursuit with dogs. I believe it to be confined to Van Diemen's Land; at all events the neighbouring islands in Bass's Straits form the extent of its range northwards. This is one of the most hardy members of the family, and would doubtless readily become acclimatized in this country, since the temperature of Van Diemen's Land more nearly resembles that of the British Islands than does any other part of Australia, in proof of which I may mention that numbers have been bred in the Menagerie of the Zoological Society, in that of the Earl of Derby and others. The full-grown male varies in weight from forty to sixty pounds: the haunch and loins are the only parts that are eaten, and these are constantly exposed for sale in Hobart Town, Launceston, and other parts of the country.

The female closely resembles the male in colour, but is about one-third less in size.