

May 4, 1897.

HERBERT DRUCE, Esq., F.Z.S., in the Chair.

The Secretary read the following report on the additions to the Society's Menagerie during the month of April 1897 :—

The total number of registered additions to the Society's Menagerie during the month of April was 99, of which 40 were by presentation, 1 by exchange, 43 by purchase, 8 were received on deposit, and 7 were born in the Menagerie. The total number of departures during the same period, by death and removals, was 85.

Amongst these attention may be called to :—

1. A fine young male specimen of the Wild Ass of Somaliland (*Equus somalicus*), obtained by purchase on April 30th. This species was originally described in the Society's 'Proceedings' for 1884 (p. 540, pl. 1.).

2. A pair of Smith's Bronze-winged Pigeons (*Geophaps smithi*) from Northern Queensland, purchased April 29th.

These are the first specimens of this beautiful Ground-Dove (figured by Gould, 'Birds of Australia,' vol. v. pl. 68) that have been exhibited in the Gardens.

Mr. Oldfield Thomas exhibited a selection of the small Mammals collected by Mr. Alexander Whyte during his expedition to the Nyika plateau and the Masuku mountains, N. Nyasa, and presented to the British Museum by Sir Harry Johnston, K.C.B.

Mr. Thomas stated that the collection contained the first specimens he had seen of several of the species obtained by the German traveller Dr. Böhm in Marungu, such as *Rhynchocyon reichardi*, "*Mus*" *kaiseri*, and *Gerbillus böhmi*.

There were also examples of several southern forms not previously recorded north of the Zambesi, such as *Lepus crassicaudatus* and *Xerus cepapi*, specimens of many S. Nyasa species already obtained by Mr. Whyte at and near Zomba, and, finally, examples of the following new species :—

*XERUS*¹ (*PARAXERUS*) *LUCIFER*, sp. n.

Size about as in the Common Squirrel. Fur soft, thick, and long. General colour brilliant rufous or orange-rufous all over, except a broad patch on the back, from the withers to the rump, which is shining black, with a few rufous hairs intermixed. Throughout the fur is blackish slaty at base, the tips being rufous. The rufous colour varies in intensity, being deepest and reddest on the head and hips, brightest and tending most to orange on the forearms, hands, and feet, while on the flanks and sides of the neck it is more or less suffused with olivaceous yellow. Belly

¹ For the reasons which have induced the use of the generic name *Xerus* for this animal and its allies, see Major, P. Z. S. 1893, p. 179.

mixed greyish and white, the hairs slaty grey basally, yellowish white terminally. Scrotum orange-yellow. No black markings on muzzle, round eyes, or on ears, all being equally rufous. The whiskers are, however, black. Tail brilliant rufous throughout, some of the hairs of the upper surface subterminally ringed with black.

Skull elongate, smoothly rounded, with short backwardly directed postorbital processes. Nasals much expanded behind, their posterior breadth greater than their anterior. Two upper premolars present.

Dimensions of the type, an adult male, in skin:—

Head and body 258 mm.; tail imperfect (of another specimen, without hairs (*c.*) 198, with hairs 260); hind foot, moistened, 52·5; ear 19·5.

Skull—greatest length 56; greatest breadth 31·7; nasals, length 15, breadth anteriorly 8, posteriorly 10·3; tip to tip of postorbital processes 23.

Hab. Kombe Forest, Masuku Range, 7000 feet.

Type. ♂. Collected by Mr. A. Whyte, July 1896.

This splendid Squirrel, beside which even *X. palliatus* looked almost dull, was really not closely allied to that animal, but by the general shape of its skull and the expansion of its nasals posteriorly seemed to show a nearer relationship to *X. cepapi* and *X. pyrrhopus*. In any case, however, the alliance was a very distant one, and no detailed comparison with these or other species was required to prove its entire distinctness from anything hitherto known.

SACCOSTOMUS ELEGANS, sp. n.

Colour very much as in an Upper Shiré specimen of *S. campestris*, from which it differs in its much longer and narrower skull, slenderer muzzle, less widely open anteorbital foramina, narrower interorbital region, straight front edge of interparietal, and small palatal foramina, which do not reach to the front edge of *m.*¹.

In some of these cranial characters *S. elegans* agreed with *S. mashonæ*, De Wint., but differed from that species in its buffy or isabelline colour, instead of the slaty grey which is so peculiar in that form.

Dimensions of the type, in skin, female:—

Head and body 144 mm.; tail 38; hind foot 18·8; ear 15.

Skull—greatest length from tip of nasals to occiput 32·5; nasals 13·3 × 3·7; interorbital breadth 4·2; interparietal 3·2 × 6·4; diastema 10·1; palatal foramina 6 × 2·5; length of upper molar series 4·3.

Hab. Karonga, Lake Nyasa.

MUS NYIKÆ, sp. n.

Similar in size and proportions to *M. chrysophilus*, De Wint., which also occurs on the plateau, but the general colour much browner, duller, and less yellow. The back grizzled black and