

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A COLLECTION OF MAMMALS FROM THE REGION  
OF MOUNT McKINLEY, ALASKA.

BY WILFRED H. OSGOOD.

Through the interest and liberality of Mr. Charles Sheldon, of New York, the Biological Survey collection has recently been enriched by a small but valuable collection of mammals from the little-known region about the northeast base of Mount McKinley, in the interior of Alaska. Mr. Sheldon spent the latter part of July about the northern base of Mount McKinley; and all of August, 1906, in the vicinity of the head of the Toklat River, having reached these localities by way of the Tanana and Kantishna rivers, traveling by steamboats to the junction of the Kantishna and Toklat and thence with pack-horses to the sources of the Toklat, high on the slopes of the Alaskan Range.

This region is mainly treeless. Mr. Sheldon writes: "At the foot of the Alaskan range on the north side, there is a belt from ten to twenty miles wide of country extending north, all rolling and completely destitute of timber except a few willows along the streams. At a few points, the timber (spruce) runs up to within seven or eight miles of the mountains. There is a strip of timber running to the foot of the Peters Glacier, then no spruce timber thence to the second branch of the Toklat River, and then no timber for fifteen miles east on another branch. My camps were all in the timberless region or at the head of the timber mentioned."

Although occupied chiefly in hunting and studying the habits of mountain sheep and other large game, Mr. Sheldon preserved specimens of small mammals also. Most interesting of these, is a small Alpine vole which not only represents a slightly characterized new subspecies but also belongs to a group of rare species hitherto known only from the Kenai Peninsula and cer-

tain islands of Bering Sea. Such records and notes in the following list as are not derived from actual specimens are based upon information received from Mr. Sheldon, whose extended natural history notes, it is to be hoped, will find publication at some future time.

### **Rangifer stonei** Allen.

#### STONES CARIBOU

On his way into the base of Mount McKinley about the middle of July, Mr. Sheldon saw many caribou, but it was then too early to secure specimens with perfect antlers, so he planned to get them on his way out, but on the return trip not an adult male was seen. However, he secured in Tanana a pair of locked antlers which had been found near the head of the Cosna River. These seem referable to *R. stonei*. One of them has a considerable part of the skull attached, including nearly perfect toothrows. The length of the toothrow is 104 mm. Measurements of the antlers are, respectively, as follows:

Length main beam (along side) 1090, 1265; greatest spread between palmations 710, 570; greatest spread between bez tines 645, 665; circumference of beam between brow and bez tines 152, 136; number of points in palmations 10—8, 3—3; number of points in bez tines 7—8, 4—3; number of points in brow tines 7—4, 7—1; total number of points 42, 21.

### **Alce americanus gigas** Miller.

#### ALASKA MOOSE.

A few moose and numerous signs were seen in the vicinity of the base of Mount McKinley and near the mouth of the Toklat, but no specimens were preserved. They are abundant throughout the timbered part of the region, to which, however, they are not confined, as they frequently traverse open country.

### **Ovis dalli** Nelson.

#### DALL SHEEP. WHITE SHEEP.

Seven specimens, six adult males and one (skull) adult female, taken August 10—30. Indefinite reports have been current to some extent to the effect that the sheep of Mount McKinley and the Alaskan Range were larger or smaller or otherwise different from the other Alaskan sheep. Such reports seem to be groundless, for the specimens are identical with those from the Kenai Peninsula, referable to *Ovis dalli*. The skins are practically pure white, but careful search reveals a very few dusky hairs here and there on the back and a very small and mostly concealed proportion of them on the tail. The pelage is entirely new and rather full and long but shows considerable brown earth stain. The skulls and horns do not appear to differ in any important respect from those of typical *Ovis dalli*. The region seems to be a great stronghold of the white sheep, but although hundreds of ewes and lambs were seen almost daily, rams were found only in very small numbers after long and determined hunting.

**Sciurus hudsonicus** Erxleben.

RED SQUIRREL.

Common in all the timber.

**Citellus plesius ablusus** Osgood.

GROUND SQUIRREL.

Eight specimens, mostly adults, from the base of the Muldrow Glacier and the head of the Toklat River. These are typical examples of *ablusus*, and thus carry its range considerably to the northeast, the nearest point from which it was previously known being the head of Lake Clark.

**Marmota caligata** (Eschscholtz).

HOARY MARMOT.

One specimen, a very fine old female, killed on the Peters Glacier, one of the few good adults of this species now in collections from the interior of Alaska.

**Castor canadensis** Kuhl.

BEAVER.

Of rather rare occurrence, in interior ponds only. No specimens.

**Evotomys dawsoni** Merriam.

DAWSON RED-BACKED MOUSE.

Two specimens, both from the wooded region at the mouth of the Toklat.

**Microtus miurus oreas** subsp. nov.

*Type*, from head of Toklat River, Alaskan Range, Alaska. No. 148,596 U. S. National Museum, Biological Survey collection. ♂ ad. August 8, 1906. C. Sheldon. Original No. 47.

*Characters*.—Similar to *M. miurus*, but tone of color more ochraceous (not so yellowish) throughout; tail slightly shorter and chiefly ochraceous, slightly or not at all darker above than below.

*Color*.—Type, in worn pelage: Upperparts and sides pale ochraceous buff or clay color somewhat toned down on back by a slight mixture of dusky and exposure of the plumbeous bases of the hairs; underparts uniform pale ochraceous buff; feet creamy buff; tail pale ochraceous buff with very faint traces of dusky on upper side.

*Skull*.—Very similar to that of *M. miurus* but somewhat narrower; braincase more elongate; zygomata less flaring anteriorly.

*Measurements*.—Type and one topotype, respectively: Total length, 125, 120; tail vertebrae, 20, 19; hind foot (dry), 19.2, 19. Skull of type: Basal length, 26.7; basilar length, 23.9; mastoid width, 11.4; interorbital constriction, 3.4; nasals, 7.4; maxillary toothrow, 6.

*Remarks*.—Seven specimens of this vole were secured in the high mountain meadows near the head of the Toklat River. Two of these are adult males and the remainder immature, but the entire series is characterized

by a richer and more reddish coloration than that of typical *minurus*, of which specimens in exactly comparable pelage are available.\* The tail is even shorter than in *minurus* and with little or no dark color on the upper side. The slight cranial characters noted above may not prove constant. The form doubtless occurs throughout the higher parts of the Alaskan Range and this is probably the extent of its distribution, for collecting in the mountains near the Yukon River and in the northern Rockies has failed to reveal it or any near relative.

Since Mr. Sheldon's trapping was chiefly confined to the region above timberline, this was the only species of *Microtus* taken. Some or all of the following probably occur at somewhat lower altitudes in the region: *M. operarius*, *M. drummondi*, *M. mordax* and *M. xanthognathus*.

**Fiber spatulatus** Osgood.

MUSKRAT.

Common about ponds in the less elevated parts of the region.

**Erethizon epixanthus myops** Merriam.

PORCUPINE.

Occurs throughout the timbered part of the region. No specimens.

**Ochotona collaris** Nelson.

COLLARED PIKA.

Five specimens, three from near the Peters Glacier, taken July 28th, and two from the base of the Muldrow Glacier, taken August 2d. All are typical of this species, which doubtless occurs in suitable places on all the high mountains of the interior of Alaska. Mr. Sheldon reports that pikas were abundant in the vicinity of his camps.

**Lepus americanus dalli** Merriam.

DALL VARYING HARE.

Hares were seen in abundance well down in the timber but no specimens were secured.

**Lynx canadensis** (Kerr).

CANADA LYNX.

Common where rabbits are to be found. One was killed on the Tanana River but was not preserved as a specimen.

**Canis albus** (Sabine).

NORTHERN WOLF.

Wolves are abundant, chiefly above timber, where many tracks were found.

---

\*The Biological Survey series of *M. minurus* being quite small, specimens from the American Museum of Natural History, kindly loaned by Dr. J. A. Allen, have also been used for comparison.

**Vulpes fulvus** subsp.

FOX.

Very abundant, especially above timber. Several were seen, including black or nearly black individuals. No specimens.

**Ursus horribilis phaeonyx** Merriam.

GRIZZLY BEAR.

Six grizzlies were secured, three adult females, and three cubs, the latter being the offspring of one mother. They show much variation in color, especially the cubs, one of which is very pale, another very dark, and the third almost exactly intermediate. All were killed high up on the mountain slopes far above timber, to which region they seem largely confined. The name "Glacier Bear" is locally applied to light colored examples of this grizzly.

**Ursus americanus** Pallas.

BLACK BEAR.

A black bear was seen on the Kantishna River and many tracks were noted in various parts of the timbered region, where the animals are evidently very abundant.

**Lutra canadensis** (Schreber).

OTTER.

Otters occur in limited numbers. No specimens.

**Lutreola vison** subsp.

MINK.

Common. Several were seen along the Kantishna and Tanana Rivers and numerous skins were seen in the possession of trappers on the Toklat.

**Mustela americana actuosa** Osgood.

MARTEN.

Common throughout the timbered part of the region. Trappers' skins seen on the Toklat were noted as being light colored and therefore probably represent the subspecies *actuosa*.

**Gulo luscus** (Linnaeus).

WOLVERINE.

Common throughout the region, except in the timberless belt, and doubtless also to be found there. Skins were seen among the trappers on the Toklat.

**Sorex** sp.

SHREW.

No specimens of shrews were secured, but that they occur is attested by the fact that the remains of one were found in the stomach of a bear. Those of probable occurrence are *Sorex personatus arcticus*, *S. obscurus*, *S. tundrensis*, and *S. eximius*.

