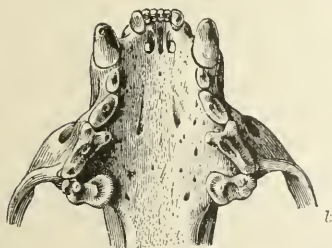
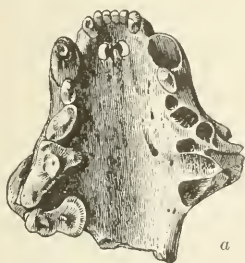


# DESCRIPTION OF AN EXTINCT MINK FROM THE SHELL-HEAPS OF THE MAINE COAST.

By DANIEL WEBSTER PRENTISS.

Upon the shores and islands of Penobscot Bay and the adjacent coast there exist numerous shell-heaps, the majority of which were made by Indians. They vary greatly in size, some being an acre in extent, while others cover but a few square yards. The age of the majority of these shell-heaps is unknown, but from the absence of metals and articles of European manufacture from many of them, it is allowable



PALATAL ASPECT OF SKULL—*a*, *Lutreola macrodon* (Type); *b*, *Lutreola vison ingens* (Type); *c*, *Lutreola vison lutreoccephalus* (No. 36915).

to suppose that these at least date back to pre-Columbian times. This idea is strengthened by the discovery in one of them of the fragment of the skull of a mink, representing an extinct species which appears to be new, and is below described for the first time. Remains of other extinct species of animals will doubtless be detected as our knowledge of the contents of these shell-heaps increases. The drawings illustrate well the specific differences pointed out below.

## LUTREOLA MACRODON, new species.

*Type specimen.*—No. 115178. United States National Museum, collected by F. W. True and D. W. Prentiss in 1897.

*Type locality.*—Brooklin, Hancock County, Maine.

*Condition of type.*—Fragment of skull composed of the superior maxillæ, portions of the nasals, right zygoma, and palate extending 6 mm. back of molars. All of the teeth are present on the right side, three incisors and one premolar on the left side. The teeth are in excellent condition except the canine, which is broken at the point, and portions of enamel missing. The bones are very brittle and of a yellowish color on their broken surfaces.

*Description.*—Rostrum very wide, nasal aperture large, ant-orbital foramina also large. The nasals ascend more abruptly than in *L. vison lutrecephalus*, its nearest relative. The dentition is very similar to this race; the principal differences being the large size of teeth and the more acute angle which the carnassial makes with the long axis of the skull.

*Measurements.*

	<i>Lutreola macrodon</i> Type.	<i>L. vison ingens</i> Type. <sup>a</sup>	<i>L. vison lutrecephalus</i> , 36915 U.S.N.M. <sup>b</sup>
	Mm.	Mm.	Mm.
Incisor row.....	8.25	7.5	6.75
Premolar row at base.....	18.25	17.7	14.50
Palate between canines.....	9.00	9.00	8.00
Palate between molars.....	12.50	12.00	11.00
From anterior of incisor row in middle line to posterior part of inner tubercle of molar.....	30.00	28.00	26.00
Between ant-orbital foramina.....	22.00	20.00	18.00
Breadth of nasal aperture.....	9.25	7.5	8.00
Ant-orbital foramen.....	6 x 4	5 x 3	4 x 3
Base of incisor row to tip of nasal.....	14.25	13.25	13.00

<sup>a</sup> Fort Yukon, Alaska.

<sup>b</sup> Near Washington, District of Columbia.

The skulls from which the foregoing measurements were taken are adult. The measurements of *L. macrodon*, compared with those of *L. v. lutrecephalus*, its nearest relative, show the enormous size of this mink. *L. v. ingens* was until now the largest American mink, but is decidedly smaller than the one here described.

The resemblance of this species to *L. v. lutrecephalus* is very striking, but the difference in size of the teeth, the angle of the nasals, and the position of the carnassials justify me, I believe, in the absence of intermediate forms, in describing it as a new species.

I wish to express my thanks to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution for permission to study and report upon this specimen, to Dr. C. Hart Merriam for access to the collections of the Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture; to Mr. Gerrit S. Miller, jr.; and to Mr. Outram Bangs, of Boston.