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National Zoölogical Park

NOTES ON ANIMALS NOW, OR RECENTLY, LIVING IN THE NATIONAL ZOÖLOGICAL PARK

WITH ONE PLATE

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The following notes relate to mammals which are rare, or have seldom been kept in confinement, and it is believed that the observations on their characteristics and habits will be of interest.

SOLENOTODON PARADOXUS

Haitian insectivore

During the early summer of 1910, Mr. Franklin Adams, Chief Clerk of the Pan American Union, made a horseback trip through the Dominican Republic, accompanied by his wife. Knowing that the Solenodon which inhabits that island is an animal of unusual zoölogical interest, and very sparingly represented in collections, they kept on the lookout for it, making inquiries wherever they went. They were fortunate enough to secure several specimens, two of which they presented alive to the National Zoölogical Park. One of these was the subject of the portrait which is reproduced here.

The animal was very restless when taken away from its regular quarters to be photographed, and in order to secure a picture which would show the characters of the head and feet, it was necessary to confine it in a glass box. The position which was taken under these conditions, and which is shown in the illustration, is not usual, for the tail is but little flexible and is ordinarily carried stiffly, straight out behind and clear of the ground, or used as a prop when the animal rests on its hind feet only.

The illustration (pl. I, fig. 2) is reproduced as showing especially well the character of the feet of this rather rare insectivore.

LOPHIOMYS IBEANUS

East African rodent

A collection of animals which was received at the National Zoölogical Park in December, 1909, from British East Africa, contained a specimen of Lophiomys, of the species later described by Mr. Old-

field Thomas as *L. ibeanus*. As will be seen from the accompanying illustration, the animal is quite different in appearance from the type species, *L. imhausii*, as usually figured. The Park is indebted for the specimen to Mr. G. H. Goldfinch, Assistant Game Warden of British East Africa.

This species of *Lophiomys* occurs in the higher part of British East Africa and is known only to the Wandorobo, a tribe of expert hunters, who explore every corner of the forests. Mr. Goldfinch was well acquainted both with the game of that region and with its animals generally, but this one he knew only from descriptions given by the natives. At his urgent request they secured two specimens in the forest near Nakuru, at about 8000 feet altitude. These he forwarded to Nairobi, whence they were shipped with the collection of animals which had been presented to the Park by Mr. W. N. McMillan of that place. One died at Port Said, while on the way to America, and the other came through safely.

Mr. Goldfinch states that *Lophiomys* is arboreal and lives in the thick forest of the high country, feeding on leaves and tender shoots, also that the natives are averse to handling the animal, believing its bite to be poisonous. It is, he says, "very rare or only got by accident here." In captivity it eats cabbage, sweet potatoes and other vegetables, and is especially fond of sweet potato leaves and the endive salad plant. It is strictly nocturnal, and its slow movements are very suggestive of the Canada porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatus*).

The illustration shows the appearance of the animal when disturbed. It then erects the long hair of its general coat, which parts along either side, leaving there a deep furrow that extends from the base of the ear to the root of the tail. The bottom of the furrow is filled with short and peculiarly modified, spongy hairs. M. Milne-Edwards, in describing the type-species, stated that he did not know of any other mammal with hair of a similar structure. When the animal is quiet the general pelage closes over this band of short hair, entirely concealing it.

URSUS GYAS

Alaskan brown bear

There is so little information available with regard to the rate of growth of wild animals that it seems to be worth while to record the weights of a male Alaska Peninsula brown bear (*Ursus gyas* Merriam) in the National Zoölogical Park, which has been weighed at intervals of about a year for eleven years. The bear was captured near Douglas Settlement at the western entrance to Cook's Inlet,

May 24, 1901, and was then probably about three and a half months old. The weights taken are as follows :

POUNDS	POUNDS
May 24, 1901 18	March 11, 1907 970
January 4, 1902 180	March 21, 1908 1050
January 15, 1903 450	March 5, 1909 960
January 18, 1904 625	January 20, 1911 1160
January 28, 1905 770	December 13, 1911 1090
February 28, 1906 890	

The bear appeared to be at his greatest weight about December 1, 1910, and would probably have reached or exceeded 1200 pounds at that time, but could not then be weighed.

The decrease shown by the weighing on March 5, 1909, doubtless resulted from extensive "corns" on all four feet and their excision June 15, 1908, which, altogether, crippled the animal for some months.



LOPHIOMYS IBEANUS Thomas



SOLENODON PARADOXUS Brandt