

PROCEEDINGS  
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THE ALPINE VARYING HARE.\*

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In the first century B. C. the varying hare of Switzerland was described by Varro.† It was known also to Pliny;‡ and, in fact, nearly all writers on the mammals of Europe down to the present time have mentioned the animal. When the varying hare of northern Europe became known it was supposed to be the same as the Swiss animal, so that the names *timidus* Linnæus, *alpinus* Erxleben, and *variabilis* Pallas, were applied collectively to both. Melchior§ is apparently the only writer who has questioned this assumed identity. Five specimens of the Swiss hare in the United States National Museum show conclusively that the species is distinct from that of Sweden. In memory of its first describer it may be known as:

**Lepus varronis** sp. nov.

*Type*.—Adult male (skin and skull) No. 105,832 United States National Museum. Collected at Grisons, Heinzenberg, Canton of Graubünden,

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†De Re Rustica, III, cap. XII.

‡Naturalis historia, III, cap. LV.

§Den danske Stats og Norges Pattedyr, p. 79, 1834.

Switzerland, December 5, 1900, by Ernst H. Zollikofer. Original number, 196.

*Characters.*—In winter pelage (summer coat not seen) externally similar to *Lepus timidus* Linnaeus. Skull and teeth smaller and much less robust than in the Swedish animal.

*Color.*—The winter pelage is pure white throughout, to base of hairs, though usually with an inconspicuous sprinkling of black hairs on back and tail. Ears faintly clouded with grayish brown along anterior margin, and conspicuously tipped with black. The black area is about 12 mm. in width, but its boundaries are not clearly defined, and it is noticeably sprinkled with white hairs. A very narrow line of short black hairs borders the eyelids. Whiskers mixed white and black. Soles of feet yellowish brown. Claws rather dark horn-color.

*Skull.*—The skull of *Lepus varronis* is readily distinguishable from that of *L. timidus* by its much smaller size. In fully adult males of the alpine hare the skull is barely larger than in females from the Helsingland, Sweden, while as compared with males from the same locality the basal length is about 12 mm. less. Aside from its size the skull shows numerous differences in form. It is in general less robust and more slender, particularly in the rostral portion. The supraorbital processes are smaller and narrower than in the Swedish animal, a difference which is especially noticeable when skulls of males are compared, but which is also evident in the females. The auditory bullæ are relatively a trifle smaller than in *Lepus timidus* and the cribriform portion of the floor of the braincase immediately in front of each is less flattened.

*Teeth.*—The teeth are smaller than in *Lepus timidus*, but I can detect no tangible differences in form.

*Measurements.*—External measurements of type: total length, 582; tail vertebrae, 53; hind foot, 164.

Cranial measurements of type: greatest length, 92 (103)\*; basal length, 77 (86); basilar length, 70 (79); henselion to posterior edge of bony palate, 34 (40); least (lateral) length of bony palate, 6.6 (7); posterior edge of bony palate to hamular, 23 (25); length of incisive foramen, 23 (27); greatest breadth of incisive foramen, 9 (10.4); diastema, 27 (31); zygomatic breadth, 46 (53); least interorbital breadth, 16 (17); greatest breadth of braincase, 32 (34); greatest breadth of both nasals together, 19 (23); least breadth of both nasals together, 13 (16.4); greatest (diagonal) length of nasals, 39 (46); depth of braincase at anterior end of basioccipital, 27 (30); maxillary molar series (alveoli), 17 (20); mandible, 67 (78); diastema, 20 (25); mandibular molar series (alveoli), 18 (21).

*Specimens examined.*—Five, all from the Canton of Graubünden.

*Remarks.*—The Alpine hare differs from the varying hares of northern Europe in the characters that would be expected to result from its relatively limited range and the less favorable conditions under which it doubtless exists.

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\*Measurements in parenthesis are those of an adult male *Lepus timidus* from Helsingland, Sweden.