

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A NEW VOLE FROM HALL ISLAND, BERING SEA.*

BY GERRIT S. MILLER, JR.

A specimen of *Microtus* collected by Mr. C. H. Townsend on Hall Island, Bering Sea, represents a species distinct from any hitherto described. It is a rather large member of the typical group of the subgenus *Microtus*, and is more nearly related to a Siberian species which I suppose to be *M. kamtschaticus* (Polyakoff) than to any of the known Alaskan members of the genus except *M. kadiacensis*. On account of its remarkably short tail it may be called:

***Microtus abbreviatus* sp. nov.**

Type, ♀ young adult (skin and skull), No. $\frac{15549}{22429}$, United States National Museum, collected on Hall Island, Bering Sea, September 8, 1885, by C. H. Townsend.

General characters.—Size rather large (hind foot, 23 mm.); tail shorter than hind foot; plantar tubercles, 6; ears concealed in the fur; enamel pattern essentially as in *Microtus arvalis* of Europe.

Fur and color.—The fur is dense and only moderately long—about 12 mm. in length at middle of back—but the specimen was taken when in the midst of the autumnal molt, with the short new hairs of the winter coat appearing as a dense mat among the roots of the longer fur. As the skin has been preserved in alcohol for an unknown period, † the original color of the animal cannot be determined with certainty. In its present condition the dorsal surface is light yellowish brown, duller on head,

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† Mr. Townsend tells me that the specimen was preserved dry. It was received at the National Museum in September, 1886, and its subsequent history is not known. It was found in a bottle of alcohol in October, 1898.

clearer on rump, paling on the sides to the soiled buff of the under parts, which are slightly darker on chest. Tail bicolor, brownish above, yellowish white beneath. Feet dirty whitish.

Skull and teeth.—The skull is imperfect, lacking the occipitals and one of the audital bullæ. It resembles that of *M. kamtschaticus* very closely, but the rostrum is slightly narrower anteriorly, the mandible is less heavily built, and the bony palate is noticeably different in form. In the palate of *M. kamtschaticus* the lateral bridges are broad and well developed and the lateral pits are deep and very noticeable. In *M. abbreviatus* the bridges are small and barely complete, while the pits behind them are shallow and inconspicuous. In no one of the seven specimens of *M. kamtschaticus* with which I have compared it is the peculiar palate of *M. abbreviatus* closely approached.

Teeth slightly smaller than in *M. kamtschaticus*, but enamel pattern essentially the same in the two species. *M. abbreviatus*, however, has the anterior loop of the front lower molar distinctly longer than in *M. kamtschaticus*. In *M. kamtschaticus* there is usually a well developed fourth outer salient angle on the posterior upper molar. This is quite absent in *M. abbreviatus*, but the character is not likely to prove constant.

*Measurements.**—Total length, 120; tail vertebræ, 19 (pencil, 9); hind foot, 22.5; ear from meatus, 9.5; ear from crown, 6. Skull: greatest length, 27; zygomatic breadth, 15; interorbital constriction, 4; nasals, 7.8; mandible, 17.4; maxillary tooth row (alveoli), 6.4; mandibular tooth row (alveoli), 6.6.

General remarks.—*Microtus abbreviatus* is closely related to both *M. kamtschaticus* and *M. kadiacensis*, though in external appearance its short, densely haired tail gives it a much closer resemblance to the members of the subgenus *Phaiomys*. In cranial and dental characters it differs from *M. kadiacensis* much as it does from *M. kamtschaticus*, since these two species agree closely in palate structure and in the form of the front lower molar.

*All from skin in alcohol.