

Proceedings of the Asiatic Society.

(Thursday Evening, 11th November, 1841.)

The Hon'ble Sir E. RYAN, President, in the Chair.

The Reverend Wm. WINCHESTER, Chaplain of Berhampore, was proposed a Member by F. BEAUFORT, Esq. seconded by the Secretary.

Library and Museum.

Read the following Reports submitted by the Curator and Librarian,

The Curator's Report.

SIR,—My report for the month of October will be found to relate chiefly to a valuable donation of Quadruped and Bird skins, procured in the vicinity of Maulmain, which have been presented to the Society by Government, and to another collection of Bird skins from the Himalaya, for which we are indebted to the liberality of Dr. Spry, of the Bengal Medical Service.

The first of these collections contains six skins of Mammalia, pertaining to as many species, and 58 of Birds, which are referrible to 42 species. I have endeavoured to determine the whole series, and shall proceed to notice them in detail, adding such remarks as I conceive may be useful to students of Zoology in this country.

The Mammalia consist of two *Carnivora* and four *Rodentia*, which are as follow:—

1. *Urva cancrivora*, Hodgson, (Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1837, p. 562,) or, more recently, *Mesobema cancrivora*, *ibid.* (Calcutta Journal of Natural History, No. 6, p. 214.)—The specimen has been mounted with considerable difficulty, from the unfortunately decayed condition of the skin, though the hair is uninjured, and its appearance now is fully as good as that of Museum specimens in general. I have also had its skull (which is quite perfect) taken out and cleaned. This, as noticed by Mr. Hodgson, is remarkable for having incomplete bony orbits, which is very rarely the case in the highly natural sub-family to which the animal strictly appertains, namely, the *Viverridæ Herpestidinæ*. I do not myself perceive any peculiar affinity which it is said to bear to the *Guline Mustelidæ*.

2. *Artictis Binturong*, Temminck; *Ictides Ater*, Valenciennes; and a juvenile brown variety, probably the ordinary dress of the young animal, *I. albifrons*, F. Cuvier.—The latter has usually been regarded as the permanent female colouring of the species, but a very old and much injured specimen of the female Binturong in our Museum, which now that the present specimen has been received, I have had the skull and limb-bones taken from, though sufficient to illustrate the fact here stated is retained of its skin, is equally black with the mature male. The Maulmain specimen is little more than half-grown, and retains its deciduary canines: its colour is black, with a grizzled whitish visage, occasioned by each hair having a subterminal yellowish-white annulation, which is likewise the case, more sparingly, on the limbs; while the belly and basal part of the tail underneath are of a dull reddish white, more or less of which, I believe, is permanent; ears white-edged, but the lengthened hair on their posterior surface black. This specimen was also in very bad condition, being much torn and decayed, but the hair is nearly perfect. Its skull has

dicus. The African genus *Indicator*,* on the other hand, which has been currently classed with the Cuckoos, appertains strictly to the natural family *Picidæ*. The only other birds I know of, wherein the clavicles do not join and form a *furcula*, besides the *Struthionidæ*, properly so called, in which they are curiously modified, are the Touracoes (*Corythaix*) of Africa (and doubtless the allied genera *Musophaga*, *Chizæris*, and *Colius*), in three different species of which I have found the clavicles to be separate, though all but joined; and various *Psittacidæ*, in which they are altogether wanting. They vary in proportionate length in different species of Toucan (*Rhamphastos*), but have been figured by l'Herminier as united in the closely allied *Pteroglossus Aricari*.

In the class of Mammalia, we are indebted to Lieutenant Tickell for two fine pairs of Deer-antlers, belonging respectively to the Sambur (*Cervus Hippelaphus*), and Axis (*C. Axis*).

In that of Reptiles, I have procured three specimens respectively of two species of Snake, and some examples of an *Anolis* common in the neighbourhood. The former are—

Psammophis cerasogaster, Cantor:—which is considered by that naturalist rather an uncommon species, and is new to the Museum; and

Tropidonotus dora, Cantor; *Dora* of Russell; *Coluber Dora*, Daudin.

Osteology.—The skeleton of the Rhinoceros, noticed in my previous report, has been remounted, and is again in its place. It is unfortunately deficient in the digital bones of all four extremities, in the sternal pieces, the penultimate pair of ribs, and one of the diminutive last pair. We possess, however, a skeleton foot of a Rhinoceros, presented to the Society by Dr. Pearson.

A skeleton of a Bat, *Scotophilus castaneus*, has also been prepared and set up, and also the skulls of the following species of *Vespertilionidæ*:—

Scotophilus castaneus.

Taphozous longimanus.

T. brevicaudus, Nobis, n. s.

Megaderma lyra, and

Dysopus plicatus (?).

Also skulls of

Canis aureus.

Vulpes montanus.

Urva Nipalensis.

Paradoxurus typus.

Arctictis Binturong.—Two specimens.

Pteromys petaurista.

Sciurus maximus.

Sciurus bicolor.

Sciurus—? Undetermined.

Mus—? Undetermined.

Gerbillus Indicus.

Georychus fuscocapillus, Nobis, n. s.

* Since writing this, I have met with a Himalayan species of true *Honeyguide*—*Indicator xanthonotus*, Nobis.