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BRITISH QUADRUPEDS.—THE MARTEN AND OTTER.

A GENUS very intimately allied to that of the Weasels, and indeed scarcely separated from it on sufficient grounds, is that formed by the Martens, which have the same slender form, and the same number of toes, which are not webbed, but differs in having one grinder more on each side, and an elongated bushy tail, while the tongue, in place of being scabrous, is smooth. Only one species occurs in Britain.

Martes foina.—The Common Marten. Considerably larger than the Polecat; greyish or yellowish-brown above; the feet and tail chocolate-brown; the throat yellow in younger, white in older individuals; the tail, including the hair, as long as the body, exclusive of the head. The head is rather flattened above, somewhat triangular, and tapers to a rather sharp muzzle; the eyes rather small: the ears short, broad, and rounded; the limbs of moderate length. The fur is dense, rather long, and soft, more elongated on the hind parts, and especially the tail; the under fur thick and woolly.

Two species of Marten figure in most works on the Mammalia of this country:—The Beech Marten, *Martes fagorum*, and the Pine Marten, *Martes abietum*; the former with the throat white, the latter with that part yellow; but, on comparing specimens, it has been found that the form and proportions are the same, that individuals intermediate in colour are seen, and, besides, that at one season the throat of the same individual may be yellow, and at another white.

The Marten, although found in woods, nestling sometimes in deserted nests of rooks or hawks, and climbing trees with the greatest facility, is not essentially sylvicolous, for it occurs in the outer Hebrides, which are totally destitute of wood, and all over the Highlands its residence is among loose blocks or stones on the sides of the hills. In other parts of the country it is occasionally met with in woods, but more frequently in rough or stony ground, on the sides of valleys overgrown with bushes. Sometimes it takes up its abode in ruined buildings, and can ascend a wall with the greatest agility. It is one of the most graceful, active, and lively of our native Quadrupeds, runs with great speed, and has been known to perform very surprising leaps. Its food consists of the flesh of small Quadrupeds, and of Birds of all kinds, being very destructive to feathered game. Now, however, it is of very rare occurrence, owing to the hostility of gamekeepers and shepherds, and for every Marten killed in the country there are at least ten Polecats. The fur is valuable, and is imported in great quantity from the northern parts of the Continent, where it is very abundant.

The Otters differ from the Weasels and Martens in having the feet short, the toes webbed, the body very long and cylindrical, and the tail long, tapering, and a little flattened. They live chiefly on fish, and reside on the banks of rivers and lakes, as well as the shores of the sea.

Lutra vulgaris.—The Common Otter. This species varies in size and somewhat in colour, some individuals measuring four feet in length, while others are half a foot shorter, and the colour being of various shades of brown. Its body is very long and cylindrical, the neck thick, the head depressed and broad, the muzzle short, broad, and rounded; the eyes very small, as are the ears, which are broadly rounded. The legs are short, very muscular, and exceedingly flexible; the feet with five toes connected by membranes extending to three-fourths of their length, with naked soles and acute claws. The fur is short, the long hairs flattened and acuminate, the woolly hairs extremely fine. The colour of the upper parts is dark brown, sometimes blackish-brown, or greyish-brown; the

sides of the head and the fore part of the neck brownish-grey; the lower parts not much lighter than the upper.

The Otter lives almost exclusively on Fish, which it pursues not only on rivers and lakes, but also in estuaries, bays, and even the margins of the open sea on the most exposed headlands. It has been thought that from this difference of habits, two species occur in Britain; but skins of Otters from Shetland, Orkney, and the Hebrides, differ in no essential respect from skins of Otters killed on rivers in the south of Scotland and in England. On shore the Otter runs with considerable speed, but not with a bounding or leaping motion, like the Martens and Weasels. In the water it moves with astonishing ease, swimming with a speed equal to that of many Fishes. Although capable of remaining immersed a considerable time, it cannot eat a Fish under the water, but brings it on shore, usually to the nearest point, and, commencing at the shoulders, devours it downwards, leaving the head and tail. It is said to destroy great numbers of Salmon in rivers and estuaries, and for this reason is proscribed. Along the coast it finds a retreat in caves, or among blocks, whence it is hunted by small Terriers. On rivers and lakes it retreats to holes in the banks, or beneath the roots of trees. Although properly piscivorous, it sometimes attacks young domestic animals, and has been known to devour earthworms and larvæ. The number of young is said to be from three to five. When taken young, the Otter may be tamed, and even taught to fish for itself and return to its home.

ON THE HABITS OF A NEWLY DISCOVERED SPECIES OF LONG-SNOURED MOUSE.

M. DUVERNOY, in a late volume of the Memoirs of the Strasburg Natural History Society, supplied the first description which has appeared of the *Macrocelides*, which he has designated from its discoverer *M. Rozeti*; and Dr Moritz Wagner has still more recently, in Wiegman's Archives, 1839, supplied some observations concerning its habits. This curious small Insect-eater, he observes, inhabits the western portion of the Province of Algiers, and has hitherto been discovered only in the neighbourhood of the towns of Oran, Tlemsan, and Arzew, and is obtained with much difficulty even there. Captain Rozet, who first sent it to France, procured it in a rocky mountain to the west of Oran, whose summit is crowned by a Marabout temple and the Spanish fort of St Cruz. The animal lives there among the cavities formed by large fragments of rocks. It seeks out natural places of concealment, and does not excavate holes; the female, however, forming a nest for her young amongst the most dense thickets of the dwarf palm. In the early hours of the day the animal quits its hiding-place, and picks out a sunny spot; and during the middle of the day, lies in the shade, among the shrubs, there lurking for its prey—the Insects which settle on the lower plants. It prefers Insects, Larvæ, Grasshoppers, and especially Snails, in fact, all small soft animals. Incapable of breaking the hard house of the *Helix lactea*, it thrusts its remarkably prolonged narrow mouth into the aperture, and generally tears away a portion of the Snail before it has time to draw itself completely into the interior of its shell. Dr W. kept twelve animals for some weeks alive in his lodgings, and fed them on small Orthoptera. They would not touch bread, maize, or sugar, although Captain Rozet states that he supported his on bread. They are exceedingly gentle animals, never biting even when tormented. They do not go on the hinder-feet, like the genus *Dipus*, or Jerboas, but always on all-fours, and when running, the length of their hind-limbs is not perceived. On the other hand, when sitting on a rock, they are frequently in the attitude of a Rabbit, either

* OCTOBER 1839.—We have this month the pleasure of announcing that we have prepared a SUPPLEMENTARY NUMBER of the Journal, consisting of Titles, Preface, Lists of Plates and Woodcuts, and a copious Index to the First Volume of our Work. To this we have added two Plates: one, the Rhinoceros, wholly new, derived from sources which were not in existence when our former Plate appeared; and the other, of the Camels, greatly altered and improved. For the valuable figure, No. 1. of the Rhinoceros Plate, we avail ourselves of this opportunity of tendering our thanks to D. A. Smith, the distinguished Naturalist, so well known as connected with the Cape, for the permission he kindly granted to copy one of the series of his beautiful "Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa," now in course of publication. Our Readers, in binding their copies, will have the kindness to substitute these plates for the former ones of the same animals.



RHINOCEROS.
1 Larger Twohorned Rhinoceros — *R. africanus*
2 Indian — *R. indicus*

A. T. Smith sculp.