

ON *PSEUDOMYS HIGGINSI*.

By

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Since Higgins and Petterd described (1882, pp. 171-176, and 1883, pp. 181-186, 195-198) several species, the Tasmanian *Rodentia* have not had much attention paid to them. Recently I obtained a series of specimens, and certain of these appear worthy of a further note; particularly so as Higgins and Petterd's types were not preserved and the validity of several of the species which they created has not been maintained. The examination of some specimens of *P. higginsi*, originally described as *Mus leucopus* by Higgins and Petterd (1882, p. 174), led me to forward a typical one to Mr. Oldfield Thomas, of the British Museum, for comparison with those sent to that institution by Mr. Petterd. Upon examination, Mr. Oldfield Thomas states that the specimen forwarded was no doubt *P. higginsi*. In view of the foregoing, the following is of interest. In the list of measurements given with the description of the type, Higgins and Petterd (1882, p. 174) gave the following:—

“Length from tip of nose to root of tail 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

“Length of tail 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches”

In a later publication (1883, page 186) Higgins and Petterd stated that the measurements of the type specimen were 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches for both the body and the tail, so it is difficult to know exactly what the type (which was not preserved) did measure; more especially as in the type description they refer to the tail as being long. In the later description reference is made to the fact that further specimens of the species have been secured, and the measurements of same were:—

“From tip of nose to root of tail 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

“Length of tail 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches”

The specimens that I have recently examined generally agree with the above as regards size, the length from tip of nose to root of tail averaging 5-5/8 inches and the tail 6-7/8 inches.

Upon the strength of the type description the vernacular description of “Short-tailed mouse” was given to this species,

but it is very apparent that such a designation is not at all appropriate. The most prominent characteristics of the species are the white tip to the nose, the white feet and under parts, and the white hair of the tail. As a vernacular designation the name "White-footed Rat" might be used, but this would lead to confusion with the White-footed pouched mouse (*Sminthopsis leucopus*). Under the circumstances the best vernacular designation appears to be the "Long-tailed Rat."

Mr. Oldfield Thomas has described (1906, p. 776) the differences which exist between the members of the group which are closely allied to *P. higginsi*, and in view of the discrepancies which have existed in the past, the following description of a recent Tasmanian specimen is given:—

♀ Lake Fenton (3,500 feet), Mount Field, Tasmania, March, 1922. Extreme tip of nose white. Whiskers black and white, some over 2 inches long. Fur long, thick, and soft. The general colour of the upper part dark brown, tinged blue. The under fur being slate blue. Darkest colouration on back, merging into pale brown on sides and into greyish white on under surface. Upper portion of tail similar to upper part of body. The whole of the under portion of tail white. Hairs on tail, especially on end, long. Feet white. Upper incisors dark orange, lower light orange. Ears rather large, tail longer than head and body. Claw of fifth hind toe just reaches base of fourth toe. Five sole pads on fore-feet, six on hind-feet.

Dimensions:—Head and body	160 mm.
Tail	175 ..
Hind foot	35 ..
Ear conch	27 ..
Muzzle to ear	40 ..

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