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A NEW *PRONOLAGUS* FROM NATAL

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Pronolagus barretti n. sp.

A SMALL form of *Pronolagus* having more in common with the southern *P. rupestris saundersiae* Hewitt and western *P. curryi* (Thomas), than the large *P. crassicaudatus* (I. Geoffroy) and its allies of the eastern belt.

In colour dark above, but rather more rufous than *P. rupestris saundersiae* Hewitt and not so rufous as *P. curryi* (Thomas); the face more rufous than the back, but the cheeks greyer, to pinkish on the lips and pinky white on the chin; the ears like the cheeks, but with pinkish on the edges and on the short hairs of the exposed inside of the ears. Nuchal collar greyish pinky, and across the throat dull pinkish with the hairs broadly dark slate at the base. The upper surface of body pale pinkish, the exposed tips of the hairs whitish, but with a decided darkening due to an abundant sprinkling of black-tipped hairs over the back and rump, the colour in the middle of all the hairs pale pink and the base of the hairs dark slate; the fore and hind feet and the tail pinky rufous, the fore rather darker than the hind feet; the upper part of the limbs merging into the colour of the back. Plantar surface of feet pinky grey. Underparts, from chest to tail, paler rufous pink than the upper surface of feet, the hairs dark slate at the roots.

The skull lacks the hinder part, comprising the occiput and bullae, but it doubtless has the bullae large like those of the western forms; the zygomatic width is about the same as in *P. saundersiae* (36.3,¹ as compared with 34-36.8) and less than in *P. curryi* (37.6-39), as also the width of the brain-case (27.3, as compared with 26.5-27.8 in *P. saundersiae* and 30 in *P. curryi*); but the interorbital (15.5) and intertemporal (13.5) constrictions are wider than in both *P. saundersiae* (13.2-15 and 9.8-12.5) and *P. curryi* (13.2-14.5 and 11.7-12.5); the palatal foramina (24 × 8.5) are narrower at the hinder part as in *P. saundersiae* and not straight-sided and broadening evenly backwards as in *P. curryi*, though in measurements much the same, namely, 21-24 × 7.5-9.2 in *P. saundersiae* and 24.5-25 × 7.5-8.5 in *P. curryi*; but the palatal bridge is broader than in both, 8.2 as compared with 5.8-7 and 6.5-7.5, respectively. The diastema is 25 as compared with 22-25.5 in *P. saundersiae* and 26.5-27 in *P. curryi*. The length of the alveoli of the upper back teeth is 13.5, in the other two species 13-14; but the upper incisors are broader at the tips than in *P. saundersiae*, 5 as compared with 4.1-4.7, but not quite as broad as in *P. curryi*, 5.1-5.5. Affinity to *P. curryi* is seen in the long and narrow nasals, which measure 40.8 × 16.5, in *P. curryi* 40-41 × 15-16, in *P. saundersiae* 33.5-37.5 × 15-17.2. The length of the zygomatics is 32, in *P. saundersiae* 28.2-30.4 and in *P. curryi* 32.5-33.

The specimen was skinned, but not measured before being sent to the Museum, but seems to be of about the same size as *P. saundersiae*, with short ears, feet and tail.

Type: T.M. No. 10014, from near Matiwane, Ladysmith, Natal, 28 August 1947, collected and donated by Mr Dudley A. Barrett, after whom I have pleasure in naming it.

Mr Barrett collected it at my request, as I had long been doubtful about the position of this *Pronolagus* in classification; it was obvious from comparison of

¹ All measurements are given in mm.

specimens from elsewhere that the species of the Natal uplands was probably different from that of Griqualand West and Eastern Cape Province. Thomas & Schwann (*Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond.* 1905, p. 138) recorded two specimens as *Pronolagus* sp.? from Zuurbron, Wakkerstroom, but when subsequently describing *P. ruddi* from Sibudeni, Zululand (p. 272), they stated that, after Mr Bonhote had compared a small specimen from Natal with the type in Paris Museum, the small species represented *P. crassicaudatus* and therefore named the larger one as *P. ruddi*. The skull they figured as representing *P. crassicaudatus* was probably that of the type of *P. curryi*, though I can find no statement as to its provenance. The type locality of *Lepus crassicaudatus* I. Geoffroy was given as Port Natal, but I am extremely doubtful whether the small species ever reached anywhere near there, the present form occurring only in the drier uplands nearer to the Drakensberg; and since there is a specimen of *Pronolagus* in the Transvaal Museum, kindly collected and donated by Commander R. B. Wilson at Gilletts, near Durban, I take this to be topotypical and going to show that *P. crassicaudatus* is the larger and not the smaller species. *Pronolagus ruddi* Thomas & Schwann from Sibudeni, Zululand differs slightly from this Durban specimen and the name may therefore be retained for a subspecies of *P. crassicaudatus*. According to I. Geoffroy *Lepus crassicaudatus* was altogether larger than the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus* L.), which has the head and body 392-437 according to G. S. Miller, Jr., whereas the small red hares measure 360-380 in *Pronolagus saundersiae* and 415-450 in *P. curryi* and the large *P. crassicaudatus* from Natal and Zululand measure 450-495, thus confirming the conclusion that the large species is the typical one.