

5. On a West-African Kob Antelope.

By R. LYDEKKER.

[Received June 1, 1899.]

(Plate LIII.)

series of specimens from Sierra Leone recently offered to the Natural History Museum are the skull and skin of a male Kob (Plate LIII.) which do not agree with those of the genus *Cobus* hitherto described. The entire series is obtained, together with examples of *C. cob*, between the Little Scarcies Rivers, in the Sierra Leone Hinterland. The male Kob, which is slightly larger than that of the female Kob, is *Cobus senganus*, indicates an adult animal. And the female Kob presents all the characters of the skull of the above-named animal. The skin is likewise similar in general characters to that of other Kob, the serial position of the animal may be ascertained.

The male Kob was approximately the same as the Senga Kob, and it evidently belongs to the same subsection.

From the Puku and Senga Kob (or Puku) it is distinguished by the black on the front surface of the fore legs and the hind pair; the hair also is shorter.

The shape and plan of coloration are very similar to those of the Puku, instead of being uniformly foxy, the general colour of the back is dark chocolate-brown, gradually turning into the flanks, and thence into the dirty white of the belly. The leg-markings are similar to those of *C. cob*, the markings on each fetlock being very distinct. There is also a black ring round the eyes. The hair on the withers and the neck is reversed.

As can be seen, the skin indicates an animal closely allied to the Puku, distinguished markedly by its colour. As the skin is not distinguished, it is impossible to ascertain whether any differences in coloration distinguish the two. But since I am not aware of the prevalence of melanism as an individual character of the Puku, it appears highly probable that the skin and skull of the above-named Kob indicate an undescribed form. Whether the form is of specific or subspecific value, it is hard to say, but, in the present state of our knowledge, the form represented by the skin and skull may be named *Cobus nigricans*.

Among the same collection are also specimens of the female Kob, of which the Museum has hitherto had no adult.

I take this opportunity of mentioning that Mr. R. Lydekker has lately presented to the Museum a male and female Kob from Barotse-land which I identify with *C. senganus*. The evidence of a female skull and skin obtained on the bank of the Barotse river, westward of the northern end of Lake

Nyasa. The female has been mounted, and agrees generally with the description of the type. Thus, contrasted with a typical female Puku, it is of smaller size, with the crown of the head blackish, more black on the ears, and the general colour of a deeper red. There are, however, whitish rings on the fetlocks, which are stated to be absent in the type. The male apparently differs from the typical Puku chiefly in its smaller dimensions, the head and ears not showing an increase of black.

As Barotse-land is not very far from the upper Loangwe valley, there is no reason why the same form of Antelope should not inhabit both localities; and I cannot regard the above-mentioned difference in respect to the light rings on the fetlocks as of more than individual or local importance. In all characters the animal is essentially a Puku, of which I regard it merely as a subspecies; and accordingly prefer to call it the Senga Puku, *C. vardoni senganus*, instead of *C. senganus*.

6. On the Leopard of the Caucasus. By R. LYDEKKER.

[Received June 5, 1899.]

(Plate LIV.)

In his recently published work entitled 'Hunting Trips in the Caucasus,' Prince Demidoff states that the Snow-Leopard (*Felis uncia*) occurs in the Caucasus; and he figures (p. 85) an animal which is undoubtedly that species. I am informed, however, that the specimen from which that figure was taken is not of Caucasian origin. And as I find that Dr. Satunin¹ especially denies the occurrence of the Snow-Leopard in the Caucasus, I have endeavoured to make out what animal had been mistaken for it.

Dr. Satunin records the occurrence of the ordinary Leopard in the Caucasus, but without stating whether Caucasian examples differ from ordinary Indian Leopards on the one hand or from African Leopards on the other. But since the so-called *Felis tulliana* of Valenciennes occurs in Asia Minor² and also in Persia³, and bearing in mind the approximation to the Ounce exhibited by that variety of the Leopard, nothing would seem more likely than it should also be found in the Caucasus.

In confirmation of this view, I have recently received through the good offices of Messrs. Rowland Ward, Ltd., a Leopard-skin from the Caucasus belonging to Prince Demidoff.

Compared with an ordinary Indian Leopard this skin (Plate LIV.) is at once distinguishable by the irregular formation and small size of the rosettes, in which the centres are not appreciably darker

¹ Zool. Jahrb., Syst. ix. p. 290 (1896).

² See Danford and Alston, P. Z. S. 1880, p. 51.

³ See Blanford, 'Fauna of British India,' Mamm. p. 69 (1888); the so-called Ounce skins referred to by the same author in his 'Eastern Persia,' vol. ii. p. 35 (1875), also doubtless belong to the form described as *F. tulliana*.

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than the general ground-colour. Moreover, from the head to the shoulders the spots are solid, like those of the Hunting-Leopard. In their large size, oblong or circular form, and wide separation from one another, they are quite unlike the spots on the same part of the body of the African Leopard, which are also solid.

The fur, which is relatively long all over the body, becomes still more markedly so on the under-parts, where it is pure white, with solid elongated black spots of very large size, but widely separated from one another. In this respect the skin is nearer to the Indian than to the African Leopard, in which the fur of the under-parts is yellowish, with the spots so large as to exhibit only a network of light ground. The resemblance of the under-parts of the present specimen to the corresponding region of the Snow-Leopard is remarkably striking; and a similar resemblance is exhibited by the very long and bushy tail, especially the terminal third, which is black and white only.

That the present specimen is, however, only a well-marked local variety of the Leopard I am quite convinced; and if I am right in identifying it with the so-called *Felis tulliana*, the latter animal must also be looked upon as a race of the same species, under the title of *F. pardus tulliana*. This will accordingly be the North-eastern representative of the species; and it will be interesting to find where it passes into the ordinary Indian form, to which it is clearly nearer than it is to the African. It is stated by Mr. Blanford to range into Baluchistan and the confines of Sind.

I may add that I am fully convinced of the advisability of separating the Indian from the African race of the Leopard; but there comes the puzzling question as to which is entitled to bear the name of *typicus*.

7. On the supposed former Existence of a Sirenian in St. Helena. By R. LYDEKKER.

[Received June 12, 1899.]

In no zoological nor distributional work¹ with which I am acquainted can I find any reference to the alleged occurrence of a Manati in St. Helena. Nevertheless, there are records to the effect that an animal going by that name formerly inhabited that island. For example, Mr. J. C. Melliss, in his work on St. Helena², definitely states that a Manati once occurred there, and goes so far as to express his opinion that it was specifically identical either with *Trichechus americanus* or *T. senegalensis*. I am also informed by my friend Mr. R. A. Sterndale, now Governor of the island, that Manatis were formerly of such frequent occurrence that there was a regular government duty on each one killed.

¹ Both Mr. Wallace in 'Island Life' and Messrs. Selater in the 'Geography of Mammals' are silent on this subject.

² 'St. Helena: a Physical, Historical, and Topographical Description of the Island.' London, 1876, pp. 86 & 87.

In answer to my enquiries, Mr. Sterndale wrote follows on the subject¹:—"The last appearance recorded of a Manati in St. Helena was in 1810, when one came ashore on Top Valley beach, and was shot by a Mr. Burnham. It measured seven feet, and ten gallons of oil were obtained from its blubber. It was seen the same year in Manati Bay.

"In the old records I find, March 20, 1690, it is recorded that 'Tuesday, Goodwin and Coales brought up for killing a Seal, and not paying the Company's Royalty. They died, and say the Sea-Cow was very small; the oyle would not amount to above four or five gallons.'

"Again, on the 11th September, 1739, 'A Sea-Cow was killed on Old Woman's Valley beach, as it was lying asleep, by Greentree.'"

This evidence, I take it, may be regarded as amply sufficient to prove the former occurrences of a marine mammal on the coast. And from the name "Manati Bay" given to a spot on the coast, it further seems evident that the animal in question was far from uncommon; although, on the other hand, it is not to be taken to have been abundant. In addition to this, the name Manati and the application of the title Manati or Sea-Cow to the animal itself, seem to be evidence in favour of the Sirenian nature of the latter; for, so far as I am aware, such names are not used in popular language to Seals. And there are no Seal specimens from the island. Moreover, if the creatures in question were Seals they would almost certainly have been numerous, and would not have been exterminated so easily. Against the Sirenian nature of the animal may, however, be urged the fact that the killing of a specimen asleep on the beach, since it is stated that there is no decisive evidence that Sirenians ever commonly come ashore². Too much importance must not be attached to this, seeing that it is, in the first place, a piece of evidence, while, in the second place, it might not be the case of an extinct species, with which we may have an instance. It decisively shows that the animal was not a Seal.

With regard to the idea of the St. Helena animal being either the African or the American Manati, it is clear that this is impossible. In the first place, although it is possible that an individual might once and again be carried ashore to the island, it is quite out of the question that there have been a case of common occurrence. And, even if the creature were a Sirenian at all, it must have been a Manati of the coast of the island. But such a coast, without a sin or estuary, would have been quite unsuited to the habits of the animal as we now know them. A Dugong might perhaps be found there if there is no evidence of the existence of those animals in the Atlantic.

If, then, the St. Helena animal were a Sirenian

¹ The same extracts in a rather briefer form are given in the 'Study of Mammals,' p. 87.

² See Flower and Lydekker: 'Study of Mammals,' p. 87.