

DESCRIPTION OF A RING-TAILED OPOSSUM,
REGARDED AS A VARIETY OF
PSEUDOCHIRUS HERBERTENSIS, COLLETT.

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HAVING recently had occasion to overhaul our duplicate collection of Marsupials, my attention was arrested by a number of specimens labelled *Pseudochirus herbertensis*. Out of twenty-two examples, seventeen were undoubtedly of this species, but the remainder presented some differences. I therefore consulted Mr. Robert Grant, by whom the Herbert River animals were procured. Unhesitatingly picking out the five forms I had marked, he told me that he was convinced that they were quite distinct from the "Outas" (*P. herbertensis*), and had so reported when unpacking the collection in 1889.

The following notes are supplied to me by Mr. Grant:— Although found in the same district as *P. herbertensis* and *P. lemuroides*, the smaller and much rarer animal was obtained within a comparatively limited area, the exact locality being known as the Boar Pocket, on the Tinaroo track, near Cairns, Queensland (or, in the language of the blacks, "Wamarama Rigarami"). This spot lies low, and is swampy. *P. herbertensis*, although obtained on the outskirts of the swamp, is an inhabitant of the higher land and ascends to the tops of tallest trees, while the swamp animal is not a high climber, and several of them were found in the Davidsonia plum tree (*D. pruriens*, F. v. M.)

Another interesting fact is that this animal builds a nest or drey not unlike that of the common Ring-tailed Opossum (*P. peregrinus*), but more ball-like in shape. In passing it may be mentioned that this latter species generally builds its nest near to creeks or in moist gullies. *P. herbertensis* never builds a nest, so the natives say.

The blacks instantly recognised the animal as distinct and called it "Moki poki." Mr. Grant would throw upon the ground a few examples of *P. herbertensis*, which the blacks would at once name "Outa." One of the swamp forms would next be cast down, when they would laugh and remark, "No more 'Outa,'—'Moki poki.'"

Although smaller than the "Outa," the animals obtained were fully adult, as our collector took young ones from the pouches of the females.