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ART. I. SORICINÆ OF NOVA SCOTIA. BY J. BERNARD GILPIN,  
A. B., M. D., M. R. C. S.

[Read November 2, 1863.]

THE following paper is a list of the members of this group identified as inhabiting Nova Scotia. I have added none that have not been identified by myself. I have no doubt one or two more species may be found hereafter.

GENUS, NEOSOREX.

*Neosorex, Palustris*.—One specimen of this species was sent me by A. VanBuskirk, Esq., and was obtained at Aylesford, N. S. It agreed with *Sorex Palustris*, Richardson, Bachman, Audubon. As my sole specimen is a skin, I do not give the measurement. It differs in being larger, having a longer tail, and the feet being edged with long stiff hairs. I have taken upon myself to separate this species into the new genus, *Neosorex*.

GENUS, SOREX.

*Sorex, Thomsoni*, (Baird.)—This species is by no means rare in the Province. I have obtained five or six specimens, one of which was one of those types that Dr. Baird formed his new species from. These are so elaborately described in "Mammals of North America," that I refer you to that work.

*Sorex, Acadicus*.—In collecting specimens of *Thomsoni*, I soon found that they differed in size, and especially length of tail, breadth of fore palm, and length of sole. In referring the specimen to Dr. Baird for identification, he detected a new species, unless the long lost *Fimbripes*, of which one specimen alone exists, may be identical with this. I possess six or eight specimens of this species in alcohol.

I would remark that all difference as regards palms and soles and tubercles, when taken from alcoholic specimens, must be received with great deductions. All the specimens in my possession, when received, had the palms and soles dry and hollow, but after being in alcohol they spread, became bleached, and swelled into tubercles. Alcohol contracts the bodies, perhaps two-thirds of an inch, but at the same time swells the tail and feet. The specimens in a natural state vary very much in the same species,—some are very fat, others lean, altering the whole figure and proportion. One specimen, a female, had six mammæ, very prominent and projecting. I suppose the peculiar and pointed muzzle of the young requires such a form of mammæ.

The measurement of five specimens obtained by myself, are as follows:—

	Inches.	Inches.
No. 1.—Total length	3 $\frac{9}{10}$ .	Tail 1 $\frac{18}{20}$ .
2.— “ “	3 $\frac{9}{10}$ .	“ 1 $\frac{15}{20}$ .
3.— “ “	3 $\frac{6}{8}$ .	“ 1 $\frac{15}{20}$ .
4.— “ “	4	“ 1 $\frac{12}{20}$ .
5.— “ “	4	2

The colour of all, olive brown above, silvery grey beneath, feet and legs flesh colour (in the recent specimen). The fur of No. 4 and 5 thicker, bodies more robust, and nose less sharp than the others. The tail subquadrate, with fine annular rings, most observable on the lower side, well covered with hair upon the upper, compressed at base, a fine pencil of hair on the tip, and brown olive above, light ash beneath. Five toes, each with a nail upon both fore and hind feet; toes all annulated; palms broad, resembling *B. Talpoides*; both palms and soles dry and hollow in the recent specimen, but softened into tubercles by alcohol,—a very slight edging of stiff hairs on outside of sole.



Should this species prove to be undescribed, the name *Acadicus*, as proposed by Dr. Baird, seems to be the most appropriate. In the length of tail—one specimen 2 inches—it certainly differs from any described species.

*Sorex, Platyrrhinus*.—One specimen of this I have obtained only, picked up dead near Halifax.

*Sorex, Personatus*.—It is with doubt I refer the single mutilated specimen obtained by myself at St. Clement's, Annapolis County, to this species.

Total length,  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inch; tail, 1 inch; hind foot,  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch; colour, brown olive above, lighter beneath; the tail nearly bare of hair, no pencil at tip, and annulations very distinct. The tail was short, peculiar in appearance, having a tactile appearance,—in this resembling *Fosteri*. In the shortness of the tail it agrees rather with *Personatus*.

#### GENUS, BLARINA.

*Blarina, Talpoides*.—This species is very common in Nova Scotia. In comparing some fifty specimens, I found them all agree in a peculiar septum between the upper lip and front teeth. In colour, they varied from nearly black to light silvery blue above, below all plumbaceous; feet and nose, rose colour in the recent specimens. In size they varied from nearly 6 inches total length, with length of tail  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches, the largest I obtained, down to 3 inches and  $\frac{5}{8}$ , total length, with length of tail,  $\frac{7}{8}$ , the smallest; this last, doubtless, a young one.

*Blarina, Cineria*.—One specimen, only, of this species, I have seen obtained in the Province. It was taken at Truro, and mounted by Mr. Winton. The very short tail ( $\frac{1}{2}$  inch) and light colour, prevented it from being confounded with the last.

I have never but on two instances seen any of this family alive—once in midwinter, and again in midsummer. In both instances they exhibited great alacrity in their movements. It is certain that some, perhaps all, swim and dive under water. They readily burrow beneath the snow. Their tracks are seen in midwinter in snow lying four feet deep in the forest, through which they must ascend to the surface, sometimes perhaps along the side of a stalk of grass. They readily enter log camps, and detached houses, pilfer

meat and bread ; when caught, bite at the finger ; die very soon on being handled, emitting faint squeaking noises.

This concludes the *Soricinæ*, identified by myself. They are all classed from “Mammals of North America,” to which work, and personally to its author, Dr. Baird, I am happy in expressing my acknowledgment. One more species nearly allied to the *Soricinæ*, *Condylura Christata*, is common to the Province. One species, only, the tail diminishing in size as the animal becomes lean ; increasing during the sexual season, or when it fattens. Animals of this order have a great tendency to fatten. I also remark that I have never seen a true mole in the Province ; from which I infer that at least they are rare. Although some one may have been more fortunate than myself.

ART. II. ON THE CAPLIN.\* (*Mallotus Villosus*.) BY CAPT. C.  
HARDY, R. A.

[Read December 7, 1863.]

ALTHOUGH not found on the coast of Nova Scotia proper, the Caplin annually visits northern Cape Breton, and so is to be included amongst the seafish of this Province ; but, independent of this fact, so much interest is connected with its habits, the vast armies in which it approaches the coasts which it favors as its favorite resorts in the spawning season, its use and abuse as an article of food or manure for the land, and finally its almost nameless value as bait for the cod, in the prosecution of the great cod-fisheries on the banks and along the shores of Newfoundland and the Labrador, that it deserves a prominent place in the history of the most curious of the finny tribes.

Richardson has carefully described the fish in his “Northern Zoology.” After Linnæus, he places it amongst the Salmonoidæ, or Salmon family, of which it is the smallest known member. He

\* Hugh Miller in his “Popular Geology,” thus speaks of the Caplin as an inhabitant of the deep, in the latter days of the tertiary period :—“Clay nodules of the drift period in Canada and the United States, are remarkable for containing the only ichthyolite found by Agassiz among seventeen hundred species which still continue to exist, and that can be exhibited in consequence in duplicate specimens—the one fit for the table in the character of a palatable viand ; the other for the shelves of a geological museum, in the character of a curious ichthyolite. It is the *Mallotus Villosus*, or Caplin.”