

DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME NEW GUINEA MAMMALS.

By

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SINCE the early days of exploration in New Guinea every opportunity has been taken, within limited resources, to acquire specimens of the remarkably interesting fauna for preservation in the Australian Museum. In 1876, Dr. E. Pierson Ramsay, when Curator, described a marsupial in the first volume of the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of N. S. Wales*, and several small collections were dealt with prior to the 1885 expedition of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia to New Guinea.

It is of interest to note that the Society was financed "almost wholly by funds contributed by various colonial Governments", and that some £4,000 was available almost at its inception. Exploration in New Guinea was given special consideration because of the general belief even then in the importance of its natural resources, and also because, though much was known of the coast line, nothing was accurately known of the geology and biology of the interior.

The interest taken by the Museum authorities in the expedition is indicated by the collecting directions supplied by the staff, and the list of "Special Desiderata of the Australian Museum" appearing in the record of arrangements for the exploration. Unfortunately the appointed taxidermist did not accompany the expedition into New Guinea, and the collection of mammals was therefore not very representative. The whole of the collecting and preservation, in addition to his special interest of entomology, fell upon the shoulders of the late W. W. Froggatt, and, as Dr. Ramsay wrote, the greatest praise was due even for the small collections made by him in other branches.

Over the past twenty years continuous efforts have been made to accumulate mammals from New Guinea and the south Pacific region, by enlisting both the aid of the Administration and the services of voluntary collectors, who are supplied with the necessary gear and advice. As a result, much interesting, if somewhat scattered, material has been gratefully acknowledged by the Museum authorities.

It is clearly desirable that such material should be described locally whenever possible, and these preliminary notes upon interesting New Guinea forms have been prepared, with grateful appreciation for the unselfish efforts of various collectors, not only that the results of their work under trying conditions shall not go unnoticed, but also for the assistance of local workers by whom such research unquestionably should be carried out if adequate funds were provided.

***Conoyces hageni eitape*, subsp. nov.**

Diagnosis.—Intermediate in size, coloration, and geographical range between the typical form of *Astrolabe* Bay and *caurina* of the Mamberamo River district of Dutch New Guinea.