

## Article VII.—PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION OF A NEW MOUNTAIN SHEEP FROM THE BRITISH NORTHWEST TERRITORY.

By J. A. ALLEN.

### PLATES II AND III.

Through the kindness of Mr. A. J. Stone, of Missoula, Montana, the Museum has received three mounted specimens of a Mountain Sheep or Bighorn quite unlike any heretofore described. They were collected by Mr. Stone on the headwaters of the Stickeen River, British Northwest Territory, near the Alaskan boundary, at an altitude of about 6500 feet. The species may be described as follows :

### **Ovis stonei**, sp. nov.

*Male Adult*.—Above gray, formed by an intimate mixture of whitish and blackish brown ; face, ears and sides of neck lighter and more whitish, being much less varied with blackish brown ; whole posterior area and lower parts from hinder part of back downward and forward, covering the posterior aspect of thighs, and the abdomen, white, the white area narrowing anteriorly and terminating in a V-shaped point on the middle of the chest ; also a broad sharply-defined band of white on the posterior surface of both fore and hind limbs, extending from the body to the hoofs, and proximally including also the inner surface ; front of neck, from base of lower jaw posteriorly to the white of the ventral surface, including the breast and greater part of the chest, and thence along the sides to the thighs, nearly black ; the lateral extension along the flanks becomes narrower posteriorly, and the neck is somewhat grizzled with white (see Pl. II) ; outer surface of both fore and hind limbs blackish brown, either uniform or in some specimens varied with a slight mixture of whitish ; back of head with a broad area of black, narrowing posteriorly and continuing to the tail as a well-defined blackish dorsal stripe ; tail wholly deep black, except a few white hairs on the middle of its lower surface ; a narrow blackish chin bar, varying in breadth and distinctness in different individuals ; hoofs black ; horns light brown.

*Measurements* (of type, ♂ ad.).—(Measurements from mounted specimens, taken with a tapeline and following the curvatures of the parts measured.)

Tip of nose to base of tail, 1676 mm. ; tail vertebrae, 89 ; tail to end of hairs, 121 ; tip of nose to eye, 197 ; tip of nose to base of ear, 305 ; length of horn (over convexity), 762 ; distance between points of horns, 552 ; circumference of horn at base, 324 ; circumference of horn at middle, 216 ; circumference of front hoof at base, 190.

This species is based on three males, of the ages respectively of 2, 5 and 6 years. The older specimen is taken as the type. On this the dark areas are blacker, and on some parts less varied with whitish tipped hairs than in the others, especially the two-year-old.

This species differs from *Ovis dalli* in the prevailing coloration being either dark gray or blackish brown, according to the area in question (see Pl. II), instead of being "a nearly uniform dirty-white color." In *O. stonei* the white is restricted to definite, sharply defined areas, in strong contrast with the adjoining parts. *O. stonei* and *O. dalli* apparently agree in size and in the character of the horns.

*O. stonei* agrees in a general way in pattern of coloration with *O. cervina* (Desm.), but the 'umber brown' or 'wood-brown' of the latter is everywhere replaced in *O. stonei* with blackish brown or black. It is also a much smaller animal, and the horns are slenderer and have a more outward curvature at the tips.

The following table gives comparative measurements of two specimens of *O. dalli* (from True, in Nelson's 'Report upon Nat. Hist. Coll. made in Alaska,' 1887, p. 283), of two specimens of *O. stonei* and of two specimens of *O. cervina* from Montana, all from mounted adult male specimens, and therefore comparable.

	O. CERVINA. <sup>1</sup>	O. CERVINA. <sup>2</sup>	O. STONEI. <sup>2</sup>	O. STONEI. <sup>2</sup>	O. DALLI. <sup>1</sup>	O. DALLI. <sup>1</sup>
Tip of nose to base of tail.....	1854	1854	1676	1626	1626	
Tip of nose to eye.....	229	228	197	194	178	
Tip of nose to base of ear.....	330	340	305	318	292	
Length of horn over convexity....	775	867	762	837	838	648
Circumference of horn at base....	444	400	324	330	293	312
Circumference of hoof at base....	267	205	190	190	211	

<sup>1</sup> From True, *l. c.*

<sup>2</sup> From specimens in Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.

Mr. Stone took measurements of the animals before skinning, but they are unfortunately not available at this writing. He also has separate skulls, which he will later forward for examination, when it will be possible to give some further particulars respecting this interesting species.

I am indebted to Mr. Stone, in whose honor the species is named, for the following observations.

"The three animals were killed in the Che-on-nee Mountains, British Northwest Territory. These mountains are a part of the interior of the Coast Range, drained by the headwaters of the Stickeen River, and not far from Alaska Territory.

"The timber line in this country extends only to a height of about 2500 feet, giving the mountain ranges the appearance of being quite high, but in reality there are no high mountains in this section of the Coast Range.

"The only specimens of this Sheep I had the opportunity of studying were the males, which I found during the months of August and September in the most rugged parts of the mountains, entirely above timber line. I often found them singly, and at no time did I discover more than five in one bunch, though one of my party reported having seen eleven together. I saw perhaps fifty head, and secured twelve specimens. I was very careful in my study of these interesting animals, and I found them to be very uniformly marked, both in color and general characteristics.

"The youngest of the three, now in the Museum, was secured Aug. 8, 1896, in a very deep and rocky cañon just at the base of one of the highest peaks in this part of the mountains. At the time I discovered him he was all alone carefully making his way down the cañon, and from what I afterwards learned I am very much inclined to believe he was then in quest of the ewes, lambs, and yearlings in the edge of the timber further down the mountain side, and it is quite likely that he had not yet regularly taken up the company of the older rams.

"The two older specimens were taken Aug. 10, about five miles distant from the first, and were the only ones in the bunch. I watched them an entire afternoon before killing them. They passed the time alternately nibbling at tiny bits of grass occasion-

ally seen peeping from crevices in the rocks, and playing or lying down on patches of snow and ice. They were very fat.

"Specimens taken two months later possessed the same markings, but were somewhat darker."

Mr. Stone is familiar with *Ovis dalli*, which he reports as occurring some two hundred and fifty miles north of the locality where he obtained the present examples of *O. stonei*.

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#### DESCRIPTION OF PLATES II AND III.

PLATE II.—*Ovis stonei*, ♂ ad.

PLATE III.—Fig. 1, head of *Ovis stonei*, ♂ ad. (same specimen as figured in Pl. II).

Fig. 2.—Head of *Ovis cervina*, ♂ ad., from Montana, for comparison with Fig. 1. The Montana specimen is probably somewhat older than the specimen of *Ovis stonei* shown in Fig. 1, but probably the difference in age is not great.

Both heads are photographed to the same scale.



OVIS STONEI, sp. nov.





Fig. 1.



Fig 2.

Fig. 1. *OVIS STONEI*, sp. nov.

Fig. 2. *OVIS CERVINA* (Desm.).

Both figures photographed to same scale.

