

The male is generally larger than the female, and his black spots are also larger. Upon the renewal of the grass, they infallibly die. In fine weather they take to the water in vast multitudes; but, when a breeze of wind rises, they are all drowned. The number of these animals is so prodigious, that, when they die, the air is infected, and produces many diseases. They even seem to infect the plants which they gnaw; for the pasture then kills the cattle. The flesh of the leming is not good; and their skin, though the hair be fine, does not answer for making furs, because it is too thick.

evoluatur, sed stato tempore aut moriuntur scervatim cum hæc terra (ex quarum corruptione air fit pestilens, et afflicta incolæ vertigine et ictero), aut his bestijs dictis vulgariter *lekar*, vel *kon-nelis*, consumuntur, unde iidem hermelini pinguefcunt; *Ol. Mag. Hist. Geog. Sept. pag. 142.*

THE SEA OTTER*.

THE *faricovienne*, (or sea otter,) says Thetvet, 'is found along the river Plata. 'It is of an amphibious nature, living more in

* Sea otter, with a black nose; upper jaw longer and broader than the lower; long white whiskers; irides hazel; ears small, erect, and conic. In each jaw there are four cutting teeth. The grinders are broad, adapted for breaking and comminuting crustaceous animals and shell fish. The skin is thick. The hair is long, thick, and excessively black and glossy, beneath which is a soft down. The colour sometimes varies to silvery. The legs are thick and short. The toes are covered with hair, and joined by a web. The hind-feet are exactly like those of a seal, and have a membrane skirting the outside of the exterior toe, like that of a goose. The length, from nose to tail, is four feet two inches. The tail is thirteen inches long, flat, fullest in the middle, and sharp pointed. The biggest of these animals weigh seventy or eighty pounds; *Pennant's Symp. of Zood. p. 241.*

Eyes, quæ et cariguibojia appellatur a Brasilienfibus; Marteg. Hist. Nat. Brasil. p. 234.

Lutra nigricans, cauda depressa et glabra; Barrele Hist. de la Franc. Equin. p. 155.

Lutra Brasilienfis; Rall's Symp. Zood. p. 189.

Loutre ou cariguibojia; Desmarchais, tom. iii. p. 306.

Ganchi; Gamilla Oronoue, tom. iii. p. 239.

Le faricovienne; Buffon.

Muñela lutris, plantis palmatis pilosis, cauda corpore quadruplo brevior; Linn. Syst. Nat. p. 66.

Lutra atrî coloris, macula sub gutture flava; Brisson. Zood. p. 203.

Lutra marina, Kalm; Nov. Com. Petrop. tom. ii. p. 367. tab. 16.

Sea otter; Hist. of Kamtschatka, p. 122. Muller's Voy. p. 57.

the water than upon land. This animal is as large as a cat; and its skin, which is a mixture of a gray and black, is as fine as velvet. Its feet resemble those of water-fowl; and its flesh is extremely good and delicate*. I begin with the above passage, because the animal is unknown to the naturalists under this name, and because they know not that the *cariguai* of Brasil, which is the same animal, has membranes between the toes. Maregrave, indeed, who gives a description of it, mentions not this character, which is an essential one, since it brings this species as near as possible to that of the otter.

Besides, I believe that the animal mentioned by Gumilla, under the name of *guachi* †, may be the same with the *faricovienne*, which is a

* Singularités de la France antarctique, par Thuret, p. 107.

† On the rivers which fall into the Orinoko, there are a great many water-dogs, which the Indians call *guachi*. This animal swims swiftly, and feeds upon fishes. It is amphibious; but goes likewise in quest of food upon the land. It digs ditches on the banks, where the female brings forth her young. These ditches are not made in retired places, but where the animals live in common, and come to amuse themselves. I carefully examined their habitations, and found them to be always exceedingly clean. They leave not the smallest herb in the neighbourhood. They heap up, at a distance, the fragments of the fishes they eat, and, by leaping, going, and returning, they make their roads extremely neat and commodious; *Hist. del Orinoko, par Gumilla, tom. iii. p. 29.* Note. These characters correspond with the *faricovienne*; but the name *guachi* seems to be here improperly applied, because it probably belongs to a species of *scottine*, which we have called the

species

species of otter common throughout all South America. From the description given of it by Maregrave and Desmarchais*, it appears, that this amphibious animal is as large as a middle-sized dog; that the top of its head is round like that of the cat; that its muzzle is somewhat long, like that of the dog; that it has the teeth and whiskers of a cat; small, round, black eyes; ears roundish, and placed low; five toes on each foot, with the thumbs shorter than the other toes, which are all armed with sharp brown claws. The tail is as long as the hind-legs. The hair is pretty short and very soft. It is black on the body and brown on the head, with a white spot under the chin. Its cry is nearly like that of a young dog; and it is sometimes interrupted by another cry similar to that of the fagoin, or fox-tailed monkey. It feeds upon crabs and fishes; but it may likewise be nourished with the flour of manioc diluted in water. Its skin makes a good fur; and, though it lives chiefly on fishes, its flesh is very good, wholesome, and has no bad flavour.

* Voyage de Desmarchais, tom. iii. p. 506.