

STUDIES ON THE FAUNA OF CURAÇAO AND OTHER
CARIBBEAN ISLANDS: No. 49.

MAMMALIAN REMAINS FROM INDIAN SITES ON
ARUBA

by

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Mr. H. R. VAN HEEKEREN and Mr. C. J. DU RY, of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde at Leiden, entrusted me with the identification of some animal remains collected from Indian sites on Aruba by Professor J. P. B. DE JOSSELIN DE JONG in 1923. These remains relate for the most part to marine turtles (*Chelonia mydas* L. and *Caretta caretta* (L.)), indistinguishable from the recent forms today living in the Caribbean Sea, but they do include also a small number of bones of mammals. These comprise a few items which are of sufficient interest to make it worth while placing the specimens on record. Five species of mammals are represented, three of which do not belong to the extant fauna of Aruba. The annotated list is given below. Details on the localities of Santa Cruz and Savaneta are to be found in Mr. VAN HEEKEREN's recent account on the non-ceramic artifacts (VAN HEEKEREN, 1960).

Order LAGOMORPHA

Family LEPORIDAE

***Sylvilagus floridanus* cf. *nigronuchalis* (Hartert)**

A fragment of a left mandibular ramus with P₃, part of a left maxillary without teeth, and a few bones; compare well with the

corresponding parts in the small hare *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis* (Hartert), which is rather common on Aruba (HUMMELINCK, 1940, p. 67). The specimens originate from "Savaneta II, 0-30 cm". It is just possible that examination of more material will prove the protohistoric cottontail to be subspecifically distinct from the living form.

Order RODENTIA

Family DASYPROCTIDAE

Dasyprocta spec.

An incomplete right femur from "Santa Cruz A, 0-30 cm" is indistinguishable from that of the aguti, *Dasyprocta*, a number of species or subspecies of which occur in the tropical regions of Central and South America from Mexico to Bolivia and Paraguay, in Brazil, the Guianas, Venezuela, Trinidad, Tobago, and many of the Lesser Antilles from Grenada to St. Kitts. The aguti has never been found in Aruba before, but it is, of course, possible that it was brought to the island by the Indians.

Order CARNIVORA

Family CANIDAE

Dusicyon (Cerdocyon) cf. thous (L.)

Three mandibular fragments labelled "Santa Cruz C, 0-30 cm" agree with the comparable parts in *Dusicyon (Cerdocyon) thous* (L.). This is a fox-like canid occurring in the savannas and woodlands of the tropical zones of northern Colombia, Venezuela, the Guianas and Brazil (HERSHKOVITZ, 1957). It has never been recorded from any of the Caribbean Islands, and its occurrence at Santa Cruz may be due to transportation by human agency.

Family FELIDAE

Felis cf. tigrina Schreber

A small felid of the size of the domestic cat is represented by fragmentary bones (humerus, ulna, femur, tibia) from "Santa Cruz C, 0-30 cm". These bones are indistinguishable from those of the small spotted cat *Felis tigrina* Schreber, known from Colombia, Venezuela, the Guianas and Brazil (ALLEN, 1919, p. 356; TATE, 1939, p. 206), but they are likewise indistinguishable from those of the ordinary European domestic cat. In the absence of more diagnostic remains the identity of the Santa Cruz cat must remain uncertain.

Order ARTIODACTYLA

Family CERVIDAE

Odocoileus gymnotis (Wiegmann) subsp.

The base of a left antler labelled "Santa Cruz C, 0-30 cm", and a fragment of the frontal comprising part of the pedicle and the burr, from the right side, and labelled "Santa Cruz A, 25-50 cm", conform to the same parts in *Odocoileus gymnotis* (Wiegmann), a species of deer living today in Curaçao, Margarita, and the adjacent parts of Venezuela and Colombia. There is also a worked proximal part of a right metatarsal labelled "St. Jan A, Curaçao". The living Curaçao form (*O.g.curassavicus* HUMMELINCK, 1940, p. 65) is thought to have been introduced by man from the peninsula of Goajira (Colombia), where it also survives (WESTERMANN, 1953, p. 31). On the basis of the material at present available, it is impossible to determine whether de Aruba specimens are subspecifically the same as those from Curaçao.

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