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Oldfield Thomas.

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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON



GENERAL NOTES.

The name of the Viscacha.

In suggesting the name *Viscaccia* (Brandis, 1786, ex Molina) for "the Viscacha" Mr. Rehn has confused two perfectly different animals. Molina's "Viscaccia" is the Chilian *Lagidium*, while the Viscacha of modern writers is the Argentine *Lagostomus* (using for the moment the best known names for each). Furthermore, there is no need to drag in the translator Brandis, as in the 1782 edition of his Saggio, (p. 307) Molina himself properly describes and names "La Viscaccia, *Lepus Viscacia*" by which term he clearly means the *Lagidium* of Chili.

Lagidium viscacia Mol. is probably the proper name for the latter animal, but the question is so intricate, partly owing to the confused use of the two names Viscacha and Chinchilla for members of the three genera *Lagostomus*, *Lagidium* and *Chinchilla*, and partly in the doubt as to what animal the name *Callomys* Goff. will be applied to by eliminators and others, that I do not like to risk making confusion worse confounded by definitely asserting its validity.

The pertinence of the generic name "*Viscacia*" to the Argentine Viscacha has been shown by Mr. Palmer (Science, N. S., VI, p. 21, 1897), though owing to the doubt* as to the date of its publication in Schinz's Naturgeschichte, the following reference may be taken as the first: *Viscaccia*, Schinz, Cuvier's Thierreich IV, p. 429 (1825). The difference in the spelling should be noted.

Curiously enough as a foretaste of the eternal Chili-Argentine confusion, Schinz heads the reference "Viscaccia Molina," but his enumeration of the digits, 4-3, and his measurements (taken from Azara) of *V. americana* are clearly diagnostic of the Argentine animal.—Oldfield Thomas.

*Probably not published before 1825 or 1826 (Palmer).

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