

AN EXTENDED DESCRIPTION OF *MUS FUSCIPES*,
WATERHOUSE.

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(Figs. 1 - 4).

Few of our native rats have been described, other than from external characters, and such characters are in many cases of but secondary value. As a revision of the Australian Muridæ is much needed, any effort towards the completion of specific descriptions will be welcomed by the Monographer.

By the kindness of Mr. E. G. W. Palmer, we are able to supply deficiencies in our knowledge of *Mus fuscipes*. The specimens described were taken at Lawson, on the Blue Mountains, and of them my correspondent writes:—

“So far as my observations go, they are locally rare, but there is a small colony in my orchard, which I first observed about twelve years ago. Dogs and Dasyures have checked their rapid increase. A peaty ridge is their favorite burrowing place, and they burrow to a great depth. They make long well-cleared surface runs, so that their burrows are easily found. Water seems very necessary to them, and they swim freely. They feed on grasses and herbage, and consume or injure much fruit, climbing the trees for it or nibbling the windfalls, which they carry to the drains and watercourses. From dissections, I believe they seldom have more than two or three young at a time. Their teeth are very powerful, and they make good use of them when roots or dead timber obstruct their excavating. Just now (August 16th, 1899), they seem to be hibernating, as they rarely come out of their nests.”

Subsequently Mr. Palmer told me that the rats had left their old haunts, or more probably had been cleared out by snakes, as a large Black Snake (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*) had been frequently seen in the immediate neighbourhood. It had, so far, evaded capture. At a recent meeting of the Linnean Society of New South Wales, Mr. Palmer announced that he had been bitten by a Black Snake in his grounds at Lawson.*

Description.—Fur long, very thick and soft to the touch. Colour rather variable, from yellowish-brown to blackish-brown. Basal portion of the fur deep grey, almost black, the tips yellow, sometimes

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