

A NEW SPECIES OF RING-TAILED PHALANGER  
(*PS. LANIGINOSUS* GROUP) FROM THE BUNYA  
MOUNTAINS, S.E. QUEENSLAND.

By

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(Plate xlv, and Figure 1.)

After the 1919 annual meeting of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union in Brisbane an excursion was made, from the 1st to 8th October, to the Bunya Range portion of the Great Divide, an excellent account of which was written by Mr. A. H. Chisholm.<sup>1</sup> Travelling 153 miles by train from Brisbane, *via* Toowoomba, to Dalby, which is the nearest point of importance to the range, the party traversed another thirty miles of plain country to the dry forests of the foothills, finally climbing some three miles along a scant and rocky trail winding through uninviting forest country to the camp situated "over 3,000 feet above sea-level." The camp was pitched at the northern base of the Mt. Mowbullian peak, which attains 3,700 feet and is said to be "very little lower than the highest peak of the Macpherson Range"; the actual site was in one of the perfectly open park-like stretches of country, described as being remarkably characteristic of the Bunya Range and as occurring "strangely, right in the middle of great stretches of jungle . . . with, overall, the statuesque forms of the Bunya pines."

In these very distinctive surroundings one of us (A. S. Le Souef) secured a young adult female ring-tailed opossum, the colouring of which is darker than that of any eastern form of the *Ps. laniginosus* group and of a different tone to that found in any Australian species of *Pseudochirus*, being so striking as to suggest that it is possibly the outcome of prolonged isolation in the unusual environment, and hence worthy of description as a new species. It was shot at the nest, built in a bush known as the "Wild Grape" or "Supple Jack," in dense forest which Chisholm describes as "the dimly-lit jungles of sub-tropical mountains." The red tone of the single specimen was so unusual that it was regarded as a possible mutant and stored away pending the acquisition of others, but recent consideration of its unique habitat and of the allied forms, indicates that it may represent an extreme blackish-red form of the *Ps. laniginosus* group, characteristic of the dense rain forests of the Bunya Range, of which the local pine is a notable feature.

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<sup>1</sup> Chisholm.—The Emu, xix, 3, 1920, p. 302.