

Mr. Henry Seebohm, F.Z.S., exhibited a skin of the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), which had been shot by Thomas Hague, a gamekeeper, in the neighbourhood of Helmsley in North-east Yorkshire last May. Two birds were together, and were both dropped by the gamekeeper by a right and left shot; but he was only able to mark one of them down. The bird found was taken in the flesh to Mr. Christopher Smith, who was unable to identify it, and sold afterwards to Mr. Robert Taylor of Harome, who preserved it. It proved to be a female. Mr. Taylor, not knowing its rarity, parted with it in exchange to Mr. C. Helstrip, a birdstuffer in York. He offered it to Mr. James Backhouse, jun., of that city, as a Lesser Kestrel, of whose collection it now forms a part. Mr. Backhouse has taken considerable trouble to satisfy himself of the bona fides of all concerned, and there is nothing in the appearance of the skin to lead to the supposition that the bird had been kept in a cage.

The American Kestrel breeds throughout North America south of lat. 62°, and is found in a more or less modified form in most parts of South America. South of Virginia this bird is said to be a resident, but there is no doubt that it is migratory in the northern portion of its range. It was not known that this species had ever visited Europe before.

Unfortunately the name of a brother of Mr. Taylor, who is now dead, had been connected with an alleged occurrence of the Swallow-tailed Kite in the same district in 1859, but there did not seem to be any reason why a possible attempt at fraud in one case should affect the authenticity of the other.

Mr. G. F. Butt, F.Z.S., sent for exhibition two examples of a variety of the Red Grouse (*Lagopus scoticus*), shot in September 1883 on the Appleby Moors in Westmoreland, and stated to be out of a brood of ten birds. They were remarkable for their pale plumage, which was nearly white, mottled with brown.

The following papers were read:—

1. On the Lesser Koodoo, *Strepsiceros imberbis* of Blyth.
By P. L. SCLATER, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S., Secretary to the Society.

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(Plate IV.)

When I was inspecting the fine collection of living animals at the Chateau Beaujardin, Tours, in October last, my friend M. J. M. Cornély called my attention to a young pair of Antelopes, which he had then lately received, and asked my assistance in determining their species. I could only tell him that they appeared to belong

to the Lesser Koodoo of Blyth, of the existence of which in Somaliland (whence the specimens in question had been obtained) I had heard from Sir John Kirk and other authorities, although I had never seen a living example of the species, and was not quite certain of its validity. The male of this pair of Antelopes having died shortly afterwards, its body was kindly sent to me entire by M. Cornély; and I have now the pleasure of exhibiting to the meeting a mounted specimen of this rare and beautiful Antelope (see Plate IV.), concerning which I propose to offer a few remarks.

The Lesser Koodoo was first discriminated as a species by Blyth in a paper read before this Society in January 1869¹. Blyth pointed out that the Lesser Koodoo differed from the larger and better known form (*Strepsiceros kudu*) in its smaller size, in the absence of the fringe of long hair down the neck in front, and in the much more compressed spiral of the curvature of the horns. From the second of these characteristics, he proposed to call the species *Strepsiceros imberbis*.

Besides the specimen of the young male Lesser Koodoo, already referred to, I have borrowed for exhibition to-night a fine head and pair of horns of an adult male of the same animal, and a pair of horns of a rather younger individual; the former kindly lent to me by Mr. E. Gerrard, jun., by whom they were received from Sir John Kirk, and the latter belonging to M. Cornély, who obtained them along with his pair of living animals². It will be observed that these specimens, so far as they go, fully support Blyth's views as to the specific distinctness of the Lesser Koodoo.

Looking to the front view of the two skulls with the horns attached now before us, the great difference in size and in the shape and form of the expanse of the spiral is at once manifest. The following are the comparative measurements of these two specimens in inches and tenths:—

	<i>Str. kudu.</i> inches.	<i>Str. imberbis.</i> inches.
Length of horns from base to tip in a straight line	35·0	18·5
Distance between tips of ditto	37·0	9·0
Length of skull from occipital condyle to end of upper jaw	15·0	12·5
Breadth of ditto across forehead	6·5	4·75

It will also be observed that, as has been well pointed out by Mr. Blyth, the spiral formed by the horns in *S. imberbis* has a much smaller axis. In *S. kudu* the spiral is very open, almost as in some specimens of the Markhore Goat (*Capra megaceros*).

I will now make a few remarks on some of the synonyms that have been assigned to this species.

¹ "Notice of two overlooked Species of Antelope," P. Z. S. 1869, p. 51.

² This pair of living animals and the horns were originally imported by Mr. C. Hagenbeck of Hamburg, along with other animals from Somaliland.

Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



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Fig. 1. Head and horns of *Strepsiceros kudu* (front view).
Fig. 2. Head and horns of *Strepsiceros imberbis* (front view).
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STREPSICEROS IMBERBIS. (Plate IV.)

Antelope tendal, Cretzschmar, in Rüpp. Atl. p. 22, 1826 (?).

Damalis capensis, Smith, Ill. Zool. S. Afr. pl. xlii. (?).

Strepsiceros kudu, Horsf. Cat. Mamm. Mus. E. I. Co. p. 170 (part.).

Strepsiceros kudu, var. 1, Gray, Cat. Mamm. iii. p. 134 (1852).

Strepsiceros imberbis, Blyth, P. Z. S. 1869, p. 54 et p. 58; Brooke, P. Z. S. 1875, p. 470.

Strepsiceros tendal, Gray, Cat. of Rum. B. M. p. 46 (1872).

Similis S. kudu, sed crassitie valde minore et maris cervice imberbi distinguendus.

Hab. Somali-land.

Dr. Gray in his most recent catalogues has used the specific name "*tendal*" for this Antelope, under the supposition that it may be the *Antelope tendal* very shortly mentioned by Cretzschmar in a footnote in Rüppell's Atlas. Cretzschmar's description is based only on native reports of an Antelope called "Tendal," which is more probably the larger Koodoo. At any rate it would not be right to oust Blyth's name in favour of one so imperfectly characterized.

I think there is little doubt that the specimen brought by Sir W. C. Harris from Shoa, Southern Abyssinia, and formerly in the East-India Company's Museum, belongs to the smaller Koodoo. It is now in the National Collection, where I have examined it. It is in a very bad condition, the hair and markings of the body having almost entirely disappeared. It is a stuffed specimen, and stands about 45 inches in height. The length of the body is about 40 inches, that of the horns 18, of the ears 7 inches.

Whether "*Damalis capensis*," as represented on plate 42 of Smith's 'Illustrations,' really belongs to *S. imberbis*, as supposed by Blyth, is, I think, very doubtful. It is true the neck has no fringe, but the horns have the open spiral of *Str. kudu*, and, so far as we know at present, *Str. imberbis* is only met with for certain in Somali-land.

P.S. (March 28).—Since I read this paper Mr. F. Holmwood, H.B.M. Consul, Zanzibar, has kindly favoured me with the following note on this Antelope:—

"I have seen the Dwarf Koodoo in the neighbourhood of the Juba river, which is exactly under the Equator. I have heard from the natives that the "Sikoro," as they call it, is found from about 2° N. to 2° S. of the coast; but as at 60° S. the ordinary Koodoo is "Msikoro," it is not safe to trust to native information. The Dwarf Koodoos that I saw on two occasions were in herds of three and four individuals respectively; but in neither case was I near enough to observe more than that the animals were of about the same size as the Beisa (*Gryx beisa*), but of a redder colour. The species is not rare on the Juba, but the country is dangerous for Europeans.