

Report No. 128

REPORT ON EXAMINATION OF MEAT SENT TO THE INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH
BY CONSERVATION OFFICER ECHLIN

On February 9, a package of meat was received from Mr. W. H. Echlin, Conservation Officer. The parcel was addressed to Dr. Hubbs and was accompanied by the following message: "Lacking the proper information and instructions who to forward such as is herein enclosed, am asking your assistance that this may be placed with proper parties for analysis. Time is limited. There is divided opinion what this meat is, and case will be for trial this week. Facts are necessary. Am desirous to know what this meat is, and receive a report on same at an early date. Will you help me out on this matter? Thanking you, and awaiting, I am very truly. (Signed) W. H. Echlin."

The writer followed up the problem of identifying this meat, which consisted of part of a haunch, including hip bone, wrapped separately. The hip region had been cooked, but the larger piece of the hind quarter was uncooked. The outside of this piece had been coated with black pepper. Since the problem was outside of fish work, the advice of Dr. L. R. Dice, of the mammal division was asked and Dr. Dice was able to give a decision on this meat, basing such decision on the bones, which were compared with those of deer in the Museum collections. His decision was that the animal was not a deer.

The following letter was dispatched to Mr. Echlin on February 9:

"The package of meat arrived today in good condition. As Dr. Hubbs is at home with an attack of tonsilitis, I am answering for him.

I have taken the meat to Dr. L. R. Dice, curator of mammals at the Museum, for examination. The structure of the ends of the long bones show that this a full-grown, or practically full-grown animal. Dr. Dice has compared bones of the hip and shin regions with the corresponding bones from deer skeletons in the museum collections. He

has told me that he is willing to give his decision that the meat sent is not from a deer. Important points of difference between these bones and deer bones are: (1) the hip bones (pelvic girdle) are more massive and less elongate than those of a deer and (2) the skin bone is much shorter than that of a deer.

We do not have a sheep skeleton here, but I got a shin-bone from a leg of lamb at a butcher shop and made comparison with that. The lamb bone measured 4 and 15/16 inches while the bone under question was 5 and 9/16 inches. However, the lamb bone showed by the structure of the ends, that growth was not complete and the difference of 10/16 inches seems about what would be expected between a young and full-grown sheep. The cooked meat looks and smells like mutton and the fat resembles mutton tallow. The raw meat is darker than that of lamb as seen in a butcher shop, however, meat of a full-grown sheep would be also darker. All in all, the meat which you sent agrees well with that of sheep. It is probably that animal, but we lack the sheep skeleton necessary to a certain check-up.

What you are most interested in, is whether or not it is venison, and Dr. Dice is certain that the bones are not from a deer.

We shall keep the bones here until you let us know whether there is further need for them."

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

John R. Greeley
Assistant Director

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