specimens which he dissected. He adds that it burrows in the earth, and suspends itself by the tail to the branches of trees, feeding partly on fruit, as do several of its congeners*.

2. CHIRONECTES.


One species of the Didelphidæ is so far modified for an aquatic life that its claim to generic distinction has been almost universally recognized. Still the distinctive characters of Chironectes are not of fundamental consequence, the most important being:—the complete webbing of the hind feet, which are proportionally very large; and the great development of the pisiform bone of the carpus, which causes a tubercle on the outer side of the fore foot, resembling a rudimentary sixth digit. In the female the pouch is well developed.

The only known species of Chironectes is a small animal of handsome markings, its ground-colour of clear grey being varied by large confluent patches of velvety black on the head and back. It attains a length of about twelve inches, with a tail of from thirteen to fifteen inches.

1. Chironectes variegatus†.


Tlacuazin de agua of Guatemalans.

Zorro de agua of Costa-Ricans6.

Hab. GUATEMALA (Salvin), Coban (Sarg); COSTA RICA (Frantzius7).—SOUTH AMERICA to Brazil.

First described from Guiana8, the Yapock or Water-Opossum has a pretty extensive range, being found in suitable localities in the northern parts of Brazil, Guiana1, and

* Monogr. de Mamm. i. p. 51.
† I have retained Illiger’s well-known specific name9, instead of reviving either of the forgotten titles previously bestowed by Zimmermann1 and Shaw2, for the following reasons. There can be no doubt that Zimmermann’s Lutra minima was intended for the present species, it being founded on la petite Loutre de Guayane of Buffon (Hist. Nat. Suppl. iii. p. 157, pl. xxii.); but the name minima when applied to the only known member of a genus is so misleading as to come fairly under Rule XI. of the Stricklandian code. Lutra saricovienna of Shaw is compounded of the above-named petite Loutre de Guayane and la Saricovienna of Buffon (Hist. Nat. xiii. p. 319), which is identified by Buffon himself with the Cariguidéjeu of Maregrave (Hist. Nat. Bras. p. 234), the Lutra brasiliensis of Brisson and of modern zoologists. Shaw’s title may therefore be at once dismissed, and Illiger’s name retained as the earliest which can be satisfactorily used for the present species.