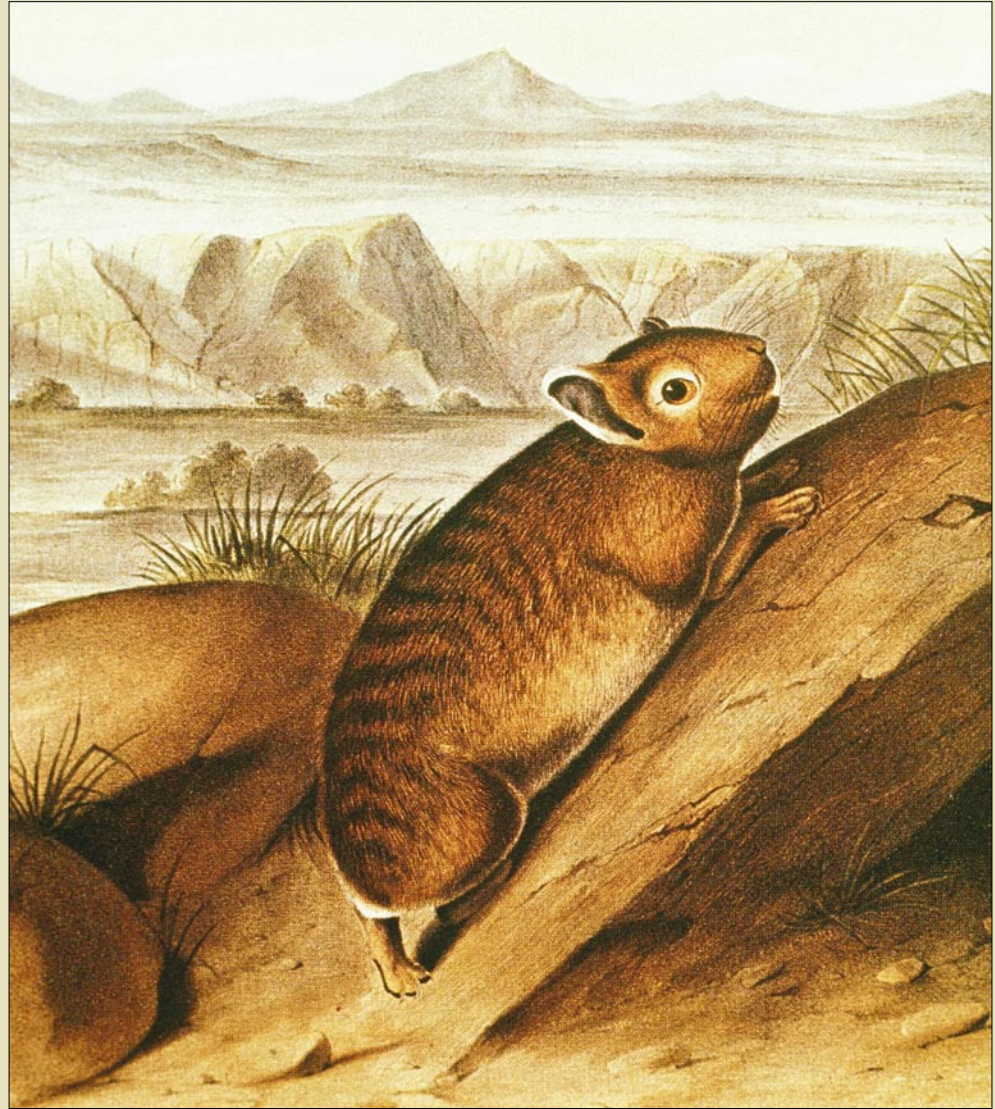




American Pika. Known at that time as the Little Chief Hare, pikas are now classified in a separate family from hares and rabbits. Audubon does not say if he used any Townsend specimens in the preparation of plate LXXXIII (detail at right) but he may well have done.

## AMERICAN PIKA



As they struggled through the mountains Townsend collected an American Pika. According to the Rev Bachman, "It was a male, taken on the 13th of August, 1834 ... The skull and teeth had been removed in the specimen we examined, except the upper incisors" (Bachman 1837; 354-355). The only surviving pika specimen attributable to Townsend must have been a different one, as it is a body mount with the skull still inside (ANSP 372); there is no precise date or collecting locality for this second specimen so it could have been taken here or acquired elsewhere.

Townsend seems not to have written anything about these curious mammals but Nuttall, in a letter to Bachman, wrote:

"I found its range to be in that latitude (42°) almost entirely alpine. I first discovered it by its peculiar cry, far up the mountain of the dividing ridge between the waters of the Columbia and Colorado, and the Missouri, hiding amongst loose piles of rocks, such as you generally see below broken cliffs. From this retreat I heard a slender, but very distinct bleat, so like that of a young kid or goat, that I at first concluded it to be such a call; but in vain trying to discover any large animal around me, at length I almost literally say, the mountain brought forth nothing much larger than a mouse, as I discovered that this little animal was the real author of this unexpected note" (Audubon and Bachman 1845-48: 258).