

Islands; they are abundant in certain parts, but do not spread extensively. Most of them are of the common grey colour; a few, as I am informed by Admiral Sullivan, are hare-coloured, and many are black, often with nearly symmetrical white marks on their faces. Hence, M. Lesson described the black variety as a distinct species, under the name of *Lepus magellanicus*, but this, as I have elsewhere shown, is an error.²² Within recent times the sealers have stocked some of the small outlying islets in the Falkland group with rabbits; and on Pebble Islet, as I hear from Admiral Sullivan, a large proportion are hare-coloured, whereas on Rabbit Islet a large proportion are of a bluish colour, which is not elsewhere seen. How the rabbits were coloured which were turned out of these islets is not known.

The rabbits which have become feral on the island of Porto Santo, near Madeira, deserve a fuller account. In 1418 or 1419, J. Gonzales Zarco²³ happened to have a female rabbit on board which had produced young during the voyage, and he turned them all out on the island. These animals soon increased so rapidly, that they became a nuisance, and actually caused the abandonment of the settlement. Thirty-seven years subsequently, Cada Mosto describes them as innumerable; nor is this suprising, as the island was not inhabited by any beast of prey or by any terrestrial mammal. We do not know the character of the mother-rabbit; but it was probably the common domesticated kind. The Spanish peninsula, whence Zarco sailed, is known to have abounded with the common wild species at the most remote historical period; and as these rabbits were taken on board for food, it is improbable that they should have been of any peculiar breed. That the breed was well domesticated is shown by the doe having littered during the voyage. Mr. Wollaston, at my request, brought home two of these feral rabbits in spirits of wine; and, subsequently, Mr. W. Haywood sent to

²² Darwin's 'Journal of Researches,' p. 193; and 'Zoology of the Voyage of the Beagle: Mammalia,' p. 92.

²³ Kerr's 'Collection of Voyages,' vol. ii. p. 177: p. 205 for Cada Mosto. According to a work published in

Lisbon in 1717, entitled 'Historia Insulana,' written by a Jesuit, the rabbits were turned out in 1420. Some authors believe that the island was discovered in 1413.