

NOTES

Notes on Bats in Bangkok

McCLURE (1978) reported that the bats that roost in the area around the Grand Palace are Hairless Bats (*Cheiromeles torquatus*). He also noted that other bats, possibly of the genus *Hipposideros*, are found in the evening flights over central Bangkok. As McClure was unable to collect any bats his identifications were based on field observations and he noted that "the initial question of what species of bats were involved in this study was never clarified". In this report I offer some observations to supplement and possibly clarify those of McClure.

The Hairless Bat is very rare in Thailand, the only specimen having been collected on Tarutau Island, Satun Province (LEKAGUL & McNEELY, 1977).

In the mid 1970's I collected four specimens of the Black-bearded Tomb Bat (*Taphozous melanopogon*) found dead in the grounds of Wat Pho. I also shot 16 bats, over rice fields on the edge of Bangkok, as they were flying out from the city at dusk—14 were Black-bearded Tomb Bats and two were Long-winged Tomb Bats (*Taphozous longimanus*). Bats of the genus *Taphozous* have relatively long ears and it is likely that it was these that McClure observed, rather than *Hipposideros*. There are no specimens of the larger *Hipposideros* from Bangkok and the nearest colonies are in Ratchaburi Province.

In 1977 renovation work was started on the roof of Wat Pho and other buildings of the Grand Palace. This caused considerable disturbance and blocked off former roost sites, and many bats apparently moved to the roof of the Supreme Court Building. Over 100 bats were collected from the Court by the Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research and all were found to be Black-bearded Tomb Bats (Jarujinta Nabhitabhata, pers. comm.). Observations in October 1980 revealed only a few hundred bats (not identified) roosting under the eaves at Wat Pho, but larger numbers were found around old buildings on the opposite side of the road. On 6 May 1981 about 200 Black-bearded Tomb Bats were seen roosting under the eaves at Wat Pho (D.S. Melville pers. comm.).

The vast evening exodus of bats which was noted by McClure is now much reduced, although no attempt has been made to estimate numbers in recent years, and it appears that many of the bats have moved away from the area of the Grand Palace.

Despite the relative ease with which a study of these bats could be made we know very little of their ecology. Two pairs (unidentified) were observed copulating at Wat Pho in October (D.S. Melville pers. comm.). Seven adult male Black-bearded

Tomb Bats collected by R.J. Dobias, D.S. Melville and me at the General Post Office, Bang Rak, on 28 October 1980 had a sugar-like crystalline secretion on the underside of the chin, which is indicative of breeding condition (LEKAGUL & MCNEELY, loc. cit.). Five virgin females were also collected, and two adult females, one of which was lactating but not pregnant (the specimens, Nos. DSM 6–DSM 20, are in my collection). Additional details are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive data for 15 Black-bearded Tomb Bats (*Taphozous melanopogon*) collected at the General Post Office, New Road, Bangkok, on 28 Oct. 1980.

Character	Males	Adult females	Virgin females
Forearm length (mm)			
range	62–67	64–66	63–66
mean	63.8	65.0	64.4
Weight (g)			
range	22.25–25.75	22.25–27.25	21.5–24.5
mean	24.9	24.8	23.7
Black beard (No.)			
full	5*	—	—
half	1*	—	—
trace	1*	—	—
absent	1	2	5
Total No. specimens	8	2	5

* sugar-like crystalline secretion present on chin

It is hoped that further studies of these bats will be made in the future.

REFERENCES

- LEKAGUL, B. and J. A. MCNEELY. 1977. *Mammals of Thailand*. Association for the Conservation of Wildlife, Bangkok.
- MCCLURE, H. E. 1978. Bats over Bangkok. *Nat. Hist. Bull. Siam. Soc.* 27: 133-168.

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