NOTES

The sheath-tailed bat *Coleura seychellensis* Peters, 1868 (Chiroptera: Emballonuridae) rediscovered on Silhouette island

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Introduction

There is no recent first-had account of the rare sheath-tailed bat *Coleura seychellensis* Peters, 1868 on Silhouette island (Matyot 1995). The species is now known still to occur there: Flavien Joubert discovered two occupied roosting sites at La Passe on July 13th 1995 (Joubert 1996). While his detailed report is in preparation, he has given permission for his findings to be summarised here. Dr. Maureen Kirkpatrick and I visited one of the roosts on 29th November 1995.

Summary of findings

Of the two occupied roosts that Joubert discovered at La Passe, Roost A is a cave in a boulder field. According to data supplied by Joubert, it is at around 30m above sea level in an area of mixed vegetation including native palms and exotic species. He counted 14 bats present. This is apparently the site also examined by myself and Kirkpatrick. We observed at least 8 bats, but did not venture very far inside what seemed to be a system of interconnecting caves and did not stay for very long for fear of unnecessarily disturbing the animals. They flew around briefly while we were there, uttering distinctive high-pitched cries before landing again on the almost horizontal ceiling.

At Roost B, another cave some 20m further uphill, Joubert found 11 bats.

He also explored caves in the coastal area of Grande Barbe and Pointe Coco, but although bat guano deposits were found inside one cave in each of these two localities, no bats were present.

Joubert sampled the flying insects present on the coastal plain of La Passe and analysed the faecal pellets of *C. seychellensis* to identify prey remains. He found that although Diptera and Hymenoptera were the most abundant insects, the bats seemed to prefer Coleoptera and Lepidoptera. By analysing the vocalisation of *C. seychellensis*, he calculated that insects less than 5.5mm long are below the prey detection limit.

Conclusion

The re-discovery of *C. seychellensis* roosts on Silhouette is further evidence of the importance of that island as a "biodiversity hot spot". While further research is needed to elucidate the biology and ecology of *C. seychellensis*, our knowledge of the species is expected to improve considerably as a result of Joubert's fieldwork. It may be added here that in 1994 he encountered foraging bats along the path to Anse Major and near La Gogue Dam and, in 1995, he discovered a bat guano deposit, but no bats, inside a cave at La Réduit, Takamaka (all localities on Mahé island).

References

Joubert, F. 1996 - Summary of work carried out on *Coleura seychellensis*, Unpublished report.

Matyot, P. 1995 - Sightings of the sheath-tailed bat *Coleura seychellensis* Peters, 1868 (Chiroptera: Emballonuridae). *Phelsuma* 3; 74-76

The rediscovery of *Pelusios seychellensis*

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In the western Indian Ocean the terrapin genus *Pelusios* is represented by three species on Madagascar and in Seychelles, with introduced populations in other island groups. The Seychelles populations are taxonomically distinct, two as endemic sub-species (*Pelusios castanoides intergularis* Bour, 1983 and *P. subniger parietalis* Bour, 1983) and the third as an endemic species (*P. seychellensis* (Siebenrock, 1906)) (Bour 1983 & 1984). Of these *P. seychellensis* is only known from three specimens collected by A. Brauer on Mahé in 1895 (Bour 1984; Siebenrock 1909). The lack of subsequent records has raised concern over its survival and all three species are believed to be endangered due to recent dramatic declines in the area and quality of suitable habitat (Gerlach 1996).

In November 1994 a terrapin was found crossing a road at 8am at Le Niol, Mahé by R.&G. Gerlach. It was photographed and relesed. The photographs were examined by us in February 1996 and recognised as *P.*