

Rediscovery of the lesser sheath-tailed bat on Pulau Ubin

Subject: Lesser sheath-tailed bat, *Emballonura monticola*, (Mammalia: Chiroptera: Emballonuridae).

Subject identified by: Noel Thomas.

Location, date and time: Pulau Ubin, 5 April 2016, 1220 hrs.

Habitat: Secondary forest, within a concrete building structure.

Observers: Contributors.

Observation: An adult example was observed roosting in the roof of an abandoned building structure. Upon detecting the observers, the bat began to fly around the room, its call audible to the human ear. Occasionally, the bat would perform a loud series of wing flutters or cling to the ceiling for a few seconds between flights. It would sometimes cling to the wall, with forearms splayed open and propped against the surface of the roost with the head facing dorsally (Fig. 1). This roosting posture is characteristic of the lesser sheath-tailed bat (Kingston et al., 2006).

The bat was captured and briefly held for close up observation and measurement before release. It is a male. Measurements obtained from the specimen are: forearm length 44.9 mm, head and body length 45.0 mm, ear length 10.4 mm, tail length 13.3 mm. The weight was 4.9 g.

Remarks: The lesser sheath-tailed bat was last recorded in Singapore at the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve by Shirley Pottie (1996). No records have been obtained since 1996 until the present discovery. This species is known to roost under boulders, and under fallen trees and buttresses. (Kingston et al., 2006). The present example was found roosting on the inclined corrugated ceiling of the structure which provides the roosting surface that lesser sheath-tailed bats seem to prefer (Fig 2). In Singapore, this species is listed as 'critically endangered' (Lim et al., 2008).

Emballonura monticola has been collected from Pulau Ubin in the last century. Three specimens (ZRC 4.6368-6370) obtained there by F. N. Chasen on 31 August 1921 are in the Zoological Reference Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore (Kelvin K. P. Lim, personal communication). The present record constitutes a rediscovery of this species for the island.

References:

- Kingston, T., B. L. Lim & A. Zubaid, 2006. *Bats of Krau Wildlife Reserve*. Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. 145 pp.
- Pottie, S. A., 1996. *Studies of the Ecology and Behaviour of Insectivorous Bat Species in Singapore*. Unpublished MSc thesis, Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore. 126 pp.
- Lim, K. K. P., R. Subaraj, S. H. Yeo, N. Lim, D. Lane & B. Y. H. Lee, 2008. Mammals. In: Davison, G. W. H., P. K. L. Ng & H. C. Ho (Eds.). *The Singapore Red Data Book. Threatened Plants & Animals of Singapore*. Second edition. Nature Society (Singapore). pp. 190-207.

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Fig 1. The featured bat clinging to the wall in a roosting posture typical for the lesser sheath-tailed bat.



Fig 2. The inclined corrugated ceiling of the building structure where the bat was found roosting.

Photographs by Noel Thomas