

## Biodiversity Record: An albino Malayan greater bamboo bat, *Tylonycteris malayana*

Marcus A. H. Chua<sup>1\*</sup> & Charlene Yeong<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, National University of Singapore, Singapore 117377; Email: [maruschua@nus.edu.sg](mailto:maruschua@nus.edu.sg) (\*corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup>Mandai Wildlife Group, 80 Mandai Lake Road, Singapore 729826; Email: [charlene.yeong@mandai.com](mailto:charlene.yeong@mandai.com)

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**Subject:** Malayan greater bamboo bat, *Tylonycteris malayana* (Mammalia: Chiroptera: Vespertilionidae).

**Subject identified by:** Marcus A. H. Chua.

**Location and date:** Singapore Island. Undisclosed residential area; 6 June 2024.

**Habitat:** Urban residence. Found roosting in a shoe cabinet.

**Observers:** Charlene Yeong and Marcus A. H. Chua.

**Observation:** A subadult male was rescued by a member of the public and handed to Mandai Wildlife Group (MWG). The MWG Veterinary Healthcare team attempted to stabilise and treat the bat, but he died later in the day. The bamboo bat had an unusual appearance with all-white hairs, pale skin and reddish eyes (Figs. 1, 2). The bat was prepared as a specimen and deposited in the Zoological Reference Collection (ZRC), of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, at the National University of Singapore, with the catalogue number ZRC 4.15396 (Fig. 2). The greatest length of skull at 12.2 mm and forearm length of 26.6 mm confirms the identification of the species as *Tylonycteris malayana* (Tu et al. 2017).

**Remarks:** Following Lucati & López-Baucells (2016) and photographic identification by Dr. Adrià López-Baucells, the hypopigmentation (light coloration) in this bat is likely due to albinism. This is probably the first published record of albinism in the species and in *Tylonycteris* as a group. Albinism has been documented in at least 115 species of bats, including other vespertilionids (Lucati & López-Baucells, 2016).

Bamboo bats are nocturnal, and they roost chiefly in the hollows of bamboo internodes during the day (Medway & Marshall, 1970). Therefore, it is not known why the bat had sought refuge in an urban human-made structure, other than a possible lack or disturbance of suitable roosting sites.

### Literature cited:

- Lucati F & López-Baucells A (2017) Chromatic disorders in bats: a review of pigmentation anomalies and the misuse of terms to describe them. Mammal Review, 47: 112–123. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mam.12083>
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- Tu VT, Csorba G, Ruedi M, Furey NM, Son NT, Thong VD, Bonillo C & Hassanin A (2017) Comparative phylogeography of bamboo bats of the genus *Tylonycteris* (Chiroptera, Vespertilionidae) in Southeast Asia. European Journal of Taxonomy, 274: 138. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5852/ejt.2017.274>



Fig. 1. Fronto-lateral view of the anterior part of the fresh bamboo bat carcass. Note the pale skin and white hair (Photograph by: Marcus A. H. Chua).



Fig. 2. Ventral view of the bat after preservation (Photograph by: Marcus A. H. Chua).