

is in accordance with the known ecology of *Praomys daltoni* in West Africa (ROSEVEAR 1969).

Praomys daltoni has apparently not been recorded from Mali so far. Furthermore, the specimens from Timbuktu and Mopti represent the northernmost record of the species at all. VAN DER STRAETEN and VERHEYEN (1978) recognized that typical *Praomys daltoni* (type locality: West Africa, probably the Island of Fernando Poo) from southern regions of West Africa have larger skull measurements than specimens from savanna regions from near Lamto, Ivory Coast. As mentioned earlier, the specimens from Timbuktu, Mali have also small skulls compared to material from Ivory Coast. Further studies might well prove that the northern populations of *Praomys daltoni* form a distinct subspecies for which the name *Praomys daltoni tuareg* could then be applied.

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Taxonomic status of *Eptesicus platyops* (Thomas, 1901) (Chiroptera, Vespertilionidae)

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The taxonomic position of *Eptesicus platyops* (Thomas, 1901) in western Africa is uncertain. At first it was thought to be related to *E. hottentotus* (A. Smith, 1833) found in southern Africa, to which it was associated as a subspecies (ROSEVEAR 1962, 1965). Later various authors (ROSEVEAR 1965; KOCK 1969; HAYMAN and HILL 1971) considered the possibility of its being co-specific with *E. serotinus* (Schreber, 1774) to which it seems more akin. However, more recent papers consider it as a valid species (HONACKI et al. 1982). The reason for this uncertainty is probably the scarcity of known specimens. Only the Nigerian holotype and another from Senegal are available (ROSEVEAR 1965).

The Estación Biológica de Doñana collection has three specimens of the genus *Eptesicus* from Malabo, Bioko island (formerly Santa Isabel, Fernando Poo), Equatorial Guinea. One is a female and the sex of the other two is undetermined. They were captured on 2. 8. 1967. All three are subadults and their wing phalangeal epiphysis are not completely fused, although the skulls appear to be totally ossified. Their dimensions are very nearly those of a full-grown adult. The measurements (in mm) of the female, followed by those two of

indeterminate sex are: forearm 49.3, 51.1, 52.5; greatest length of skull 19.8, 19.9, —; condylobasal length 19.3, 19.6, —; zygomatic breadth 13.8, 14.0, —; interorbital constriction 4.9, 4.8, 4.8; mastoid breadth 11.1, 11.1, —; maxillary toothrow length 7.3, 7.6, 7.8; breadth across upper molars 8.7, 8.9, —; mandible length 14.7, 14.7, 15.4; mandibular toothrow length 8.1, 8.3, 8.6.

The shape of the tragus coincides with the description given by ROSEVEAR (1965, fig. 67c) of the holotype *E. platyops*. The inner, upper incisors are bifid and the fur is a pale colour. All of these traits coincide with *E. platyops* (Thomas, 1901). The forearm measurements are considerably larger than those of the holotype, although more nearly coinciding with those of the Senegal specimen given by ROSEVEAR (1965).

A comparison of these specimens with *E. serotinus* from southern Spain shows that the former are paler, though no other important differences occur. Even the shape of the tragus of the *E. serotinus* examined ranged variously from pointed and narrow to broad and blunt.

As a result, *E. platyops* ought to be considered as a junior synonym of *E. serotinus*.

This conclusion lends strength to the possibility that *E. loveni* Granvik, 1924 from Kenya is also a synonym of *E. serotinus* (KOCK 1969; HAYMAN and HILL 1971).

It is reasonable to believe that the African populations of *E. serotinus* south of the Sahara make up a subspecies on their own owing to their isolation and to the ecological features of their environment.

The status of *E. serotinus gabonensis* (Trouessart, 1897) should be considered when naming this subspecies, specially taking into account that it exists in Gabon because of its proximity to Bioko island. The similarity in the size of the forearm between the specimens of this island and the possible syntypes of *gabonensis* (forearm 51.5–53.4) (HILL pers. com.) should also be remembered.

However, the evidence presented by HAYMAN and HILL (1971) and HILL (pers. com.) on the northern Indian origin of the collection in which the *gabonensis* syntypes are located would seem to advise that this name should not be used for African populations. Therefore the most correct denomination for this subspecies is *E. s. platyops* (Thomas, 1901).

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