

# New records and comments for the Mauritanian mammal fauna

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## INTRODUCTION

Very few works dealt on the mammals from Mauritania. Some preliminary data were provided by Spatz (1926, 1930), subsequently, Dekeyser & Villiers (1956) provided a detailed list of the mammals from the Adrar Mountains in Central Mauritania and until the 70's no more information was published. Subsequently, Poulet published the first work dealing on bats (Poulet 1970) and small mammals (1974) and Gauthier-Pilters (1977) on the dromedary. Others works included some punctual information from Mauritania: Petter (1961), Meester & Setzer (1972), Happold (1973). Nevertheless, during the last 20 years Mauritania has received more attention by mammalogists and some works have been recently published: on marine mammals (Smeenk *et al.* 1992;

Ba 1997; Robineau 1995, 1997; Robineau & Vely 1997, 1998; Vely *et al.* 1997); on small mammals (Ba *et al.* 2000; Granjon *et al.* 2001); on bats (Qumsiyeh & Schlitter 1981; Cosson *et al.* 1996); on the mammals of the coastal area (Cosson *et al.* 1997; Granjon *et al.* 1997; Granjon *et al.* 2001; Ly *et al.* 1997; Marissal & Colas 1997). Some recent general works also compiled some information from Mauritania (Le Berre 1990; Kingdon 1997). Nevertheless, the knowledge on the distribution of mammals in Mauritania is still very scarce and new records are still expectable. During a long fieldwork expedition to Mauritania (from April to August 2002), some species of mammals were collected, two of them previously unreported and three others still very poorly known for the country. The goal of this work is to provide new distributional

information about these five species and, in order to facilitate future research on the Mauritanian mammals, we provide a preliminary species list. A more thorough list including localities, museum data and taxonomic revisions is far from the objectives of this work. Data were obtained from fieldwork and interview with local people around the country; review of the published scientific literature (see references above) and the revision of three relevant unpublished report (MDRE & DEAR 1998; Lamarche 1998; Nickel 2001). All reviewed literature is cited in the text. Specimens collected were deposited in the Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales (CSIC) of Madrid, Spain (MNCN) and Estación Biológica de Doñana (CSIC), Sevilla, Spain (EBD).

## NEW RECORDS

### Order CARNIVORA Family VIVERRIDAE

#### *Civettictis civetta* (Schreber, 1776)

MATERIAL EXAMINED. — Two specimens were found in southern Mauritania. The first was a female (MNCN-M21466) (weight 5 kg; head-body length 718 mm; tail length 337 mm) found dead the 14th April 2002 near Tintâne (Wilaya Hodh El Gharbi). It was over-ran at the point 16°23.895'N/10°08.913'W on the road Nouakchott-Nema. The second was a skull donated in June 2002 by a hunter who killed the Civet near Ayoûn El Atroûs (75 km eastward from the previous; coordinates: 16°39'41"N/9°37'2.3"W). These are the first country records.

### Order CHIROPTERA Family VESPERTILIONIDAE

#### *Eptesicus floweri* (de Winton, 1901)

MATERIAL EXAMINED. — Two specimens (EBD 26179-80) collected during the night in a mist net, on 29 May 2002, Mahmûdé Lake, Wilaya Hodh Ech Chargui, coordinates: 16°29.969N/7°42.911'W. Forearm length 33.5 (EBD 26179, female); 33.2 (EBD 26180, male). This is the first country record.

### Order CHIROPTERA Family VESPERTILIONIDAE

#### *Pipistrellus rueppelli* (Fisher, 1829)

MATERIAL EXAMINED. — One adult male (EBD 26181) collected during the night in a mist net, on 29 May 2002 at Mahmûdé Lake, Wilaya Hodh Ech Chargui, coordinates: 16°29.969N/7°42.911'W. Forearm length 34.3 mm. This is the second country record.

### Order CHIROPTERA FAMILY HIPPOSIDERIDAE

#### *Hipposideros caffer* (Sundevall, 1846)

MATERIAL EXAMINED. — One adult male (EBD 26178) collected during the night in a mist net, on 30 April 2002 at Terjît, Wilaya Adrar, coordinates: 20°15.578'N/13°05.854'W. Forearm length 44.6 mm. This is the third country record.

### Order RODENTIA Family MURIDAE

#### *Pachyuromys duprasi* (Lataste, 1880)

MATERIAL EXAMINED. — One specimen captured the night of the 6th May 2002 at the point 23°42.399'N/12°16.678'W (Wilaya Tiris-Zemmour). The specimen (MNCN-M21465) was a male (testicles well developed; head-body length 87.62 mm, tail length 54.48 mm) captured by hand under a bush (*Aristida* sp.) on an open sandy plain. This is the second country record.

## DISCUSSION

The first record of African Civet in Mauritania is surprising because this species was suspected to occur south of the 15°N (Haltenorth & Diller 1980) and was reported only to Senegal (Meester & Setzer 1972). Nickel (2001, unpublished) reported the species in the wet savannas from Diawling National Park, and in the monograph

on the Mauritanian Biodiversity (MDRE & DEAR 1998, unpublished) the species is cited for the Tagant region. All reported records are from the Sahara border, within the Sahel Savanna. The habitat is formed by dry savannas of *Acacia* spp. and *Balanites aegyptiaca*, and is similar to some areas in northern Senegal. This species probably occurs along a wide range in the Sahel Savanna of Mauritania. The first country records of a median size carnivore at this time show how scarce is the knowledge on the Mauritanian mammals diversity.

*Eptesicus floweri* was known from Sudan (Koopman 1975) and Mali (Braestrup 1935). The nearest record is that of Tombuktu in Mali. The forearm length reported from Sudan range from 34-37 (n = 6) in males and 38 mm (n = 2) in adult females (Koopman 1975). Specimens reported herein are smaller. This species was cited in thorny acacia thickets from Sudan and Mali (Koopman 1975), a habitat similar to the *Acacia* formations of the Sahel where it was found in Mauritania.

To date only a male and two females of *Pipistrellus ruepelli* were recorded in Mauritania (Qumsiyeh & Schlitter 1981). They were collected in the sahel savannas of Garak (coordinates: 16°33'N, 15°46'W). The specimens herein reported constitute the second country record and fourth voucher specimen. They were collected about 500 km eastward from the previous. The habitat where this species was found is a temporary wetland surrounded by sahel savannas composed mainly by *Acacia* spp. formations.

*Hipposideros caffer* was previously recorded from Garak (a male and three females) and Rosso (a female, coordinates: 16°31'N, 15°49'W) in Southern Mauritania (Qumsiyeh & Schlitter 1981). This record is the third for the country and far northern (about 400 km airline) from the previous. Nevertheless it is not surprising to find an Afrotropical species at this locality because Terjît is a small relict stream in the Adrar Mountains, where some plant and animals species of the Sahel have been found (Dekeyser & Villiers 1956).

*Pachyuromys duprasi* is a very scarce mammal of the Sahara (Le Berre 1990). This species was

found in an area belonging to the Meridional Western Sahara Bioregion (Le Houérou 1990). The first record of this species in Mauritania was that of Poulet (1974), from an owl pellet collected in Akjoujt (Wilaya Inchiri, coordinates: 19°44.636'N, 14°23.139'W), about 400 km southward of our record. Another near record, 250 km Northward, is that from Zemmour in the West Sahara (Aulagnier & Thévenot 1982). With the new records, the mammal fauna know for Mauritania consists on 109 species, 81 terrestrial and 28 marines (Appendix 1). Muridae, with 22 species, is the most diverse family in the country. Small carnivores (Mustelidae and Felidae) are also diverse (seven species), which can be due to the high abundance of rodents in the country (pers. obs). Another important group for Mauritania are marine mammals (Vely *et al.* 1997) that include very endangered species as *Monachus monachus* and *Trichechus senegalensis*. Some large mammals cited in the old literature are now extinct (*Panthera leo*, *Lycaon pictus*, *Loxodonta africana*, *Giraffa giraffa*, *Damaliscus lunatus*, *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* and *Oryx dammah*). Hunting and long dry periods are the main causes of mammal extinction pointed by local people. Nevertheless, following local people, *Hippopotamus amphibius* could be still present in Diawling National Park, *Panthera pardus* and *Acinonyx jubatus* would inhabit in the Wilaya Tagant and Hodh ech Chargui. The bovid *Addax nasomaculatus* could also still survive in the Northeastern corner of the country, and some specimens of *Ammotragus lervia* could still inhabits the Adrar and Tagant mountains and some *Inselbergs* near the border of Western Sahara. Nevertheless, all these records needs confirmation and extensive fieldwork is urgently required to determine the status of all big mammals species in Mauritania because we could be now facing the last possibility to recovery some of these species.

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APPENDIX 1. — Preliminary list of the mammal fauna from Mauritania.

**INSECTIVORA**

**Erinaceidae**

- Atelerix albiventris*  
*Paraechinus aethiopicus*  
**Soricidae**  
*Crocidura fuscomurina*  
*Crocidura lusitanica*  
*Crocidura nanilla*  
*Crocidura tarfayensis*  
*Crocidura viaria*

**CARNIVORA**

**Canidae**

- Canis aureus*  
*Vulpes zerda*  
*Vulpes pallida*  
*Vulpes rueppelli*

**Hyaenidae**

- Crocuta crocuta*  
*Hyaena hyaena*

**Felidae**

- Acinonyx jubatus*  
*Caracal caracal*  
*Felis libyca*  
*Felis margarita*  
*Leptailurus serval*  
*Panthera pardus*

**Phocidae**

- Monachus monachus*

**Mustelidae**

- Aonyx capensis*  
*Herpestes ichneumon*  
*Herpestes sanguinea*  
*Ictonyx libyca*  
*Ictonyx striatus*

- Ichneumia albicauda*

- Mellivora capensis*

**Viverridae**

- Civettictis civetta*  
*Genetta genetta*

**TUBULIDENTATA**

**Orycteropodidae**

- Orycteropus afer*

**HYRACOIDEAE**

**Procavidae**

- Procavia rufipes*

**CHIROPTERA**

**Emballonuridae**

- Taphozous perforatus*  
*Taphozous nudiventris*

**Hipposideridae**

- Asellia tridens*  
*Hipposideros caffer*

**Molossidae**

- Mops condylurus*

**Nycteridae**

- Nycteris hispida*

**Pteropodidae**

- Eidolon helvum*

**Rhinopomatidae**

- Rhinopoma hardwickei*  
*Rhinopoma microphyllum*

**Vespertilionidae**

- Eptesicus floweri*  
*Nycticeius schlieffeni*  
*Pipistrellus rueppelli*  
*Scotophilus leucogaster*

**ARTIODACTYLA**

**Hippopotamidae**

- Hippopotamus amphibius*

**Suidae**

- Phacochoerus africanus*

**Bovidae**

- Tragelaphus scriptus*  
*Gazella dorcas*  
*Gazella rufifrons*  
*Ammotragus lervia*

**PRIMATES**

**Cercopithecidae**

- Papio papio*  
*Erythrocebus patas*

**LAGOMORPHA**

**Leporidae**

- Lepus capensis*  
*Lepus saxatalis*

**RODENTIA**

**Sciuridae**

- Euxerus erythropus*

**Ctenodactylidae**

- Felovia vae*

**Hystricidae**

- Hystrix cristata*

**Dipodidae**

- Jaculus jaculus*

**Myoidae**

- Graphiurus hueti*

**Muridae**

- Rattus rattus*  
*Gerbillus nigeriae*  
*Gerbillus riggenbachi*  
*Gerbillus nanus*  
*Gerbillus mauritanicae*  
*Gerbillus pyramidum*  
*Gerbillus gerbillus*  
*Gerbillus campestris*

- Gerbillus tarabuli*

- Pachyuromys duprasi*

- Arvicanthus niloticus*

- Meriones crassus*

- Meriones libycus*

- Taterillus arenarius*

- Taterillus pygargus*

- Desmodilliscus braueri*

- Psammomys obesus*

- Acomys cahirinus*

- Mastomys huberti*

- Mus haussa*

- Mus musculus*

- Thryonomys swinderianus*

- Cricetomys gambianus*

**SIRENIA**

**Manatidae**

- Trichechus senegalensis*

**CETACEA**

**Delphinidae**

- Susa teuszii*

- Steno bredanensis*

- Grampus griseus*

- Tursiops truncatus*

- Stenella frontalis*

- Stenella attenuata*

- Stenella longirostris*

- Stenella coeruleoalba*

- Stenella clymene*

- Delphinus delphis*

- Orcinus orca*

- Peponocephala electra*

- Globicephala melas*

- Globicephala macrorhynchus*

**Phocoenidae**

- Phocoena phocoena*

**Ziphiidae**

- Mesoplodon europaeus*

- Mesoplodon densirostris*

- Mesoplodon bidens*

**Physeteridae**

- Physeter macrocephalus*

**Kogiidae**

- Kogia breviceps*

**Balaenopteridae**

- Balaenoptera musculus*

- Balaenoptera physalus*

- Balaenoptera borealis*

- Balaenoptera edeni*

- Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

- Megaptera novaeangliae*