

Habitat selection by the Common Pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* s. l. (Chiroptera: Vespertilionidae), in the Dinevar region of western Iran

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Abstract. The habitat selection by the Common Pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* sensu lato, was studied using heterodyne bat detectors during 19 nights in the Dinevar region of Kermanshah Province, western Iran. Our data indicate that this bat forage predominantly in a different range of aquatic habitat although other terrestrial habitats are also used regularly. From 699 *P. pipistrellus* s. l. passes, 25% were made above riparian vegetation, 24% in marshland, 23% above water meadows, 14% in fields, and 13% in conifer plantations.

Kurzfassung. Die Habitatwahl der Zwergfledermaus, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* sensu lato, wurde in der Dinevar-Region in der westiranischen Provinz Kermanshah in 19 Nächten mit Hilfe eines Bat Detectors untersucht. Die Art nutzt zur Nahrungssuche hauptsächlich verschiedene Typen von Feuchtgebieten, wenngleich terrestrische Habitate auch regelmäßig aufgesucht werden. Von insgesamt 699 Feststellungen fallen 25% auf Ufervegetation, 24% auf Sumpfbiete, 23% auf Feuchtwiesen, 14% auf Felder und 13% auf Koniferenpflanzungen.

Key words. Habitat selection, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* sensu lato, bat detector, foraging habit, Middle East.

Introduction

There are many studies that aim at determining the habitat preferences of different species of bat by using bat detectors. Studies on *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* in various parts of Europe indicate that this bat utilizes several habitat types (BARLOW 1997). In a comparative study of habitat selection by three bat species in Scotland, RYDELL et al. (1994) found that *P. pipistrellus* predominantly uses rivers and ponds as foraging areas, whilst woodland and farmland are also used, though to a lesser extent. They concluded that *P. pipistrellus* is an adaptable species, which is not restricted to foraging along riparian strips. Similar results have also been published by RUSS & MONTGOMERY (2002) for Northern Ireland, indicating that *P. pipistrellus* forages over a wide range of habitats, including rivers, canals, deciduous woodlands, lake and reservoir margins. WARREN et al. (2000), in studying the habitat preferences of *P. pipistrellus* in relation to small-scale variation in riverine habitats in the United Kingdom, found that this bat significantly preferred sections of river with a smooth surface and trees on both sides.

This study aims to identify the habitat selection of *P. pipistrellus* s. l. in Iran. A study area was chosen which includes various habitat types and which is also heavily disturbed by human activities. The species is abundant and widespread in Iran (AKMALI et al. 2004, SHARIFI et al. 2000).