

Notes on two species of horseshoe bats, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and *R. euryale* (Rhinolophidae, Chiroptera), from northern Syria

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Abstract. Two species of horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and *R. euryale*) were found roosting together at a historic site in Salaheddin Citadel, 30 km east of Lattakia, in the coastal region of northern Syria. The Greater Horseshoe Bat *R. ferrumequinum* constituted 63.6% of the collected specimens, while the Mediterranean Horseshoe bat *R. euryale* formed 36.3%. External, dental and cranial characters are discussed, measurements for the collected specimens are given; additionally, the skull structure for both species is illustrated.

Kurzfassung. In der Salaheddin-Burg, 30 km östlich von Lattakia in der Küstenregion Nord-Syriens, wurden zwei gemeinsam rastende Arten von Hufeisennasen-Fledermäusen festgestellt: *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* und *R. euryale*. Die Große Hufeisennase (*R. ferrumequinum*) umfasste 63,6% aller gesammelten Tiere, die Mittelmeer-Hufeisennase (*R. euryale*) 36,3%. Von den gesammelten Tieren werden äussere sowie dentale und kraniale Merkmale mitgeteilt und diskutiert. Zusätzlich wird die Schädelstruktur für beide Arten dargestellt.

Key words. Horseshoe bats, *Rhinolophus euryale*, *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, Chiroptera, small mammals, Syria, Middle East.

Introduction

The monogeneric family Rhinolophidae is represented in Arabia by six species of horseshoe bats: *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, *R. clivosus*, *R. hipposideros*, *R. blasii*, *R. euryale* and *R. mehelyi* (HARRISON & BATES 1991). All six species have been recorded from the countries adjacent to Syria: Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine (ATALLAH 1977, QUMSIYEH et al. 1998, AMR et al. 2004). However; little is known about the horseshoe bats of Syria, and only two species have been reported to occur within the current borders of Syria. In their comprehensive review of the mammals of Arabia, HARRISON & BATES (1991) stated "WETTSTEIN (1913) recorded 14 specimens of Blasius's horseshoe bat *R. blasii* from Aleppo; a specimen referred to *R. f. ferrumequinum* from Tripoli, Syria (presently in Lebanon) is in the BMNH collection; also specimens previously assigned to *R. euryale* have been reported from Aleppo by WETTSTEIN (1913) and from Djeroud by TROUESSART & KOLLMAN (1923)". HARRISON & BATES (1991) also commented that there were no details concerning the measurements or lancet shape of the Aleppo and Djeroud specimens and they were therefore only tentatively referred to *R. euryale*, following DEBLASE (1972).

Little information about the presence of other species of horseshoe bats in Syria is available, despite the comparatively large area of this country and its different habitats, due to the limited zoological research. The aim of this study is to contribute to the knowledge of horseshoe bats from Syria, and to add new information and comparative material for the chiropteran fauna of the country.