

A NEW LOCALITY RECORD FOR *EIDOLON HELVUM* (MEGACHIROPTERA)

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THE YELLOW or Giant Fruit Bat, *Eidolon helvum* (Kerr, 1792) occurs mainly in the Central African forest block and is extremely abundant in parts of this area. Ogilvie and Ogilvie¹, for example, note a colony of about 2,000-4,000 in Kampala, Uganda, and in certain areas of the Congo (Kinshasa) it is said to be utilised as a source of food. It is also extensively found, however, as an occasional migrant in other parts of Africa, including Southern Africa (Roberts²) where scattered records of single specimens are known from such localities as Mashonaland and the sea off Hondeklip Bay in Little Namaqualand (Sclater³), Port Nolloth, Koegas, Bedford and Steynsburg (Shortridge⁴). In the Transvaal Museum there are specimens from Douglas, Pretoria, Warden and Kasempa (Zambia).

So far there have been no specimens recorded from South West Africa, and the following record may therefore be of interest.

This specimen was found at the Namib Desert Research Station, Gobabeb, on the Kuiseb River, during May, 1967, hanging from a camel-thorn where it had probably died of starvation. Of its only two possible sources of food, the salvadora berries (*Salvadora persica*) were not yet ripe, while the wild figs (*Ficus sp.*), which bear fruit from January to March, were past their fruiting season. The skin and skeleton of the bat were well-preserved due to the desert climate; however, insects had penetrated the skin and completely devoured the fleshy parts and viscera. The animal was young, judging from the incomplete ossification of the cranial sutures and from the pelage which lacked the tawny half-collar.

However strange it may seem to find a fruit bat in the Namib Desert, it must be

appreciated that this specimen was found in the Kuiseb River which forms a migration route for fauna and flora. *Salvadora* bushes form dense thickets along the riverbanks and it can therefore be assumed that this particular specimen came from the interior and flew down the Kuiseb River in search of fruit, probably the salvadora berries.

Table of Measurements (in millimetres)

Cranium:			
Greatest length	.....	.....	53.8
Width of brain case	.....	.....	20.5
Zygomatic width	.....	.....	29.3
Width across M ²	.....	.....	15.7
Width across canines	.....	.....	9.3
Palate length	.....	.....	27.0
Orbit to tip of nasal	.....	.....	20.1
Mandible length	.....	.....	41.9
Upper tooth row (C-M ²)	20.1
Lower tooth row (C-M ₁)	23.0
Body:			
Forearm length	110.0
Ear length	18.7
Tail	11.9

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(Received August, 1967.)