

First record of *Taphozous melanopogon* in the Barmer area of the Thar Desert, Rajasthan, India

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Abstract. A colony of *Taphozous melanopogon* has been discovered in the Kiradu temple, Barmer, Rajasthan. The record represents a significant extension of the distribution range of this species to the west of ca. 250 km and the westernmost marginal point of the range as well.

India, Chiroptera, *Taphozous*, distribution

The black-bearded tomb bat (*Taphozous melanopogon* Temminck, 1841) is distributed widely within the Indian subcontinent (Bates & Harrison 1997). This highly gregarious species lives in diurnal roosts represented usually by temple ruins and caves; however, unlike other Indian emballonurids, *T. melanopogon* (along with *T. perforatus*) roosts almost exclusively in man-made structures (Brosset 1962a, b). Although *T. melanopogon* has been reported from Udaipur in sou-



Fig. 1. Site of common roosting of *Taphozous perforatus* and *Taphozous melanopogon* in the Kiradu temple, Barmer.

Table 1. Morphometric data (in millimetres) on two *Taphozous melanopogon* specimens collected from the Kiradu temple, Barmer, Rajasthan, India

dimension	♂	♀
head and body length	75	77
tail length	29	30
hind foot length	11.0	11.5
forearm length	64.0	66.0
ear length	19.1	20.0
wingspan	398	400

thern Rajasthan (Sinha 1981), we did not find any previous reference of its presence as westward as in the Barmer District (24° 85' – 26° 32' N, 70° 05' – 72° 52' E).

In January 2011, during our survey in and around the Barmer part of the Thar Desert (made from September 2010 to March 2012), we detected a roost of *Taphozous melanopogon* (Fig. 1). Twenty individuals were located in the Kiradu temple, Barmer; the temperature in the roost ranged between 25 and 40 °C. *T. melanopogon* roosted in the temple together with four other bat species, viz. *Rhinopoma microphyllum* (Brünnich, 1782), *R. hardwickii* Gray, 1831, *Taphozous nudiventris* Cretzschmar, 1830, and *T. perforatus* Geoffroy, 1818. From the group, we collected two individuals, a male and a female; their external dimensions are presented in Table 1.

The record from Barmer represents a significant extension of the distribution range of *T. melanopogon* to the west of ca. 250 km and the westernmost marginal point of the range as well (Bates & Harrison 1997).

References

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received on 19 September 2012