

Petr BENDA and Peter VALLO

**TAXONOMIC REVISION OF THE
GENUS *TRIAENOPS* (CHIROPTERA:
HIPPOSIDERIDAE) WITH DESCRIPTION
OF A NEW SPECIES FROM SOUTHERN
ARABIA AND DEFINITIONS OF A NEW
GENUS AND TRIBE**

Institute of Vertebrate Biology
Academy of Sciences of the
Czech Republic, v.v.i.

Brno 2009

¹ Department of Zoology, National Museum (Natural History), Václavské nám. 68, 115 79 Praha 1, Czech Republic; e-mail: petr.benda@nm.cz

² Department of Zoology, Faculty of Sciences, Charles University, Viničná 7, 128 44 Praha 2, Czech Republic

³ Institute of Vertebrate Zoology, AS CR, v.v.i., Květná 8, 603 65 Brno, Czech Republic; e-mail: vallo@ivb.cz

⁴ Institute of Botany and Zoology, Masaryk University, Kotlářská 2, 611 27 Brno, Czech Republic

BENDA P. & VALLO P. 2009: Taxonomic revision of the genus *Triaenops* (Chiroptera: Hipposideridae) with description of a new species from southern Arabia and definitions of a new genus and tribe. *Folia Zool.* 58 (Monograph 1): 1–45.

Abstract

The genus *Triaenops* has been considered monospecific in its African and Middle Eastern range (*T. persicus*), while three other species have been recognised as endemic to Madagascar (*T. menamena*, *T. furculus*, and *T. auritus*), and another to the western Seychelles (*T. pauliani*). We analysed representative samples of *T. persicus* from East Africa and the Middle East using both morphological and molecular genetics approaches and compared them with most of the available type material of species of this genus. Morphological comparisons revealed four distinct morphotypes in the set of examined specimens; one in Africa, the others in the Middle East. The Middle Eastern morphotypes differed mainly in size, while the allopatric African form showed differences in skull shape. Two of three Arabian morphotypes occur in sympatry. Cytochrome *b* gene-based molecular analysis revealed significant divergences (K2P distance 6.4–8.1% in complete *cyt b* sequence) among most of the morphotypes. Therefore, we propose a split of the current *T. persicus* rank into three species: *T. afer* in Africa, and *T. persicus* and *T. parvus* sp. nov. in the Middle East. The results of the molecular analysis also indicated relatively close proximity of the Malagasy *T. menamena* to Arabian *T. persicus*, suggesting a northern route of colonisation of Madagascar from populations from the Middle East or north-eastern Africa as a plausible alternative to presumed colonisation from East Africa. Due to a considerable genetic distance (21.6–26.2% in 731 bp sequence of *cyt b*) and substantial morphological differences from the continental forms of *Triaenops* as well as from Malagasy *T. menamena*, we propose generic status (*Paratriaenops* gen. nov.) for the group of Malagasy species, *T. furculus*, *T. auritus*, and *T. pauliani*. We separated the genera *Triaenops* and *Paratriaenops* gen. nov. from other hipposiderid bats into Triaenopini trib. nov. recognising their isolated position within the family Hipposideridae Lydekker, 1891.

Key words: *Triaenops parvus* sp. nov., *Paratriaenops* gen. nov., Triaenopini trib. nov., morphological analysis, genetic analysis, cytochrome b, Middle East, Afrotropics, Madagascar

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