

## Fragmenta Theriologica

### The Easternmost Occurrence of Bats in Polynesia

Najdalsze na wschodzie występowanie nietoperzy na Polinezji

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Krzanowski A., 1977: The easternmost occurrence of bats in Polynesia. *Acta theriol.*, 22, 19: 271—272.

Two overlooked sources on Polynesian bats are listed. According to them bats, probably Pteropids, are known on Rarotonga I. and Mangaia I. (Cook Is.) which are 1086 km and 1282 km EES from Niue I., respectively. The last named island was hitherto the easternmost bat locality in the Pacific, if we put aside the island colonized from the Americas.

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To the easternmost Polynesian islands colonized by bats from the West belong Samoa, Tonga, and Niue (=Savage) (Ryberg, 1947; Wodzicki & Felten, 1975).

However, a paper by Smith (1902) which is probably unknown to mammalogists mentions the flying foxes from Rarotonga I. situated at 21°14'S, 159°46'W, its distance from Niue I. being 1086 kilometers EES. Smith considered the flying foxes from both the islands as conspecific.

Now, part of another apparently overlooked paper by Gill (1876) deserves to be cited: »The last island in the Pacific to the eastward where the bat is found, is Mangaia. No other island in the Hervey Group (=Cook Is., A.K.) has one. They are very common on Samoa and on Savage Island. What is the law of their distribution? On measuring one I found it to be thirteen and three-quarter inches from wing to wing; the body was three and a quarter inches in length. It is very interesting sometimes, in the morning, to see hundreds of these creatures clinging to one another, and suspended like a vast rope from the strong branch of a tree overhanging the perpendicular cliffs of the interior of the island. Their smell is unendurable. At Samoa they are venerated as gods (aitu). At Savage Island and at Mangaia they are regarded by the natives as a great delicacy. I once saw a very fine one cooked, and was invited to partake of it, but I declined with thanks. They abound in the numerous limestone caverns of Niue (sic!) and Mangaia, and feed upon ripe fruits. They are easily caught at sunrise, when they are in a semi-torpid state«.

It can be seen from the above excerpt that Gill did not know about the presence of bats at Rarotonga.

Some time ago I communicated the above information to Dr. K. Wodzicki, Wellington, New Zealand, who during his visit in 1974 to Poland told me he had been informed that bats still occurred at Mangaia. The geographical position of Mangaia is  $21^{\circ}55'S$ ,  $157^{\circ}55'W$ . Its bats seem to belong to *Pteropidae* although they are intriguingly small. The probable presence of bats on this island deserves close investigation as it seems to extend the geographical range of the Polynesian bats 1282 km EES from Niue I.

Some ethnographical and geographical publications probably contain even more information unknown to mammalogists on bats of the Pacific islands. One should attempt to verify them as soon as possible as those bats are endangered by eradication.

#### REFERENCES

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Accepted, July 5, 1976.

### Contribution to the History of Bats on Iceland

Przyczynek do historii nietoperzy na Islandii

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Krzanowski A., 1977: Contribution to the history of bats on Iceland. *Acta theriol.*, 22, 19: 272—273.

The paper calls attention to the overlooked and oldest source on Icelandic bats and gives the evidence in favour of the view that some 200 years ago the American species *Lasiurus cinereus* (Beauvois, 1796) got to Iceland by wing.

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Records of Icelandic bats were reviewed by Koopman & Gudmundsson (1966) who suppose that individuals of *Lasiurus cinereus* are driven there by storms. Other investigators, however, as Hayman (1959) do not consider it as certain because all the findings took place when the human transport was already well developed. Therefore it should be noted that the bats were known in Iceland already in the 18th century. Pennant (1784, p.L) states: »The Common Bat, ... is sometimes found in this island ...«, p. CLXXXII. »... the Common Bat was originally tempest-driven to the latter (Iceland) from Norway«. In the same book,