

THE OCCURRENCE OF
THE ALOE BAT
EPTESICUS ZULUENSIS IN
THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

D. A. SCHLITTER

Section of Mammals
Carnegie Museum of Natural History
Pittsburgh, PA15213
USA

I. L. RAUTENBACH

Transvaal Museum
P. O. Box 413
Pretoria
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In the course of performing a systematic review of southern African species of the genus *Eptesicus*, the collection at Skukuza in the Kruger National Park, Republic of South Africa, was examined. This collection previously formed the basis of reports on the species of small mammals of the Park (Pienaar 1964, 1970 and 1972; Rautenbach 1975). This report is part of a continued active effort to increase the knowledge of the distribution of species of small mammals within the boundaries of the Park.

Examination of the collection of *Eptesicus* revealed one specimen incorrectly identified as *E. capensis*. This specimen, CHIR.NKW 64, is an adult male Aloe bat, *Eptesicus zuluensis*, which was taken at the Stangene windmill area in the northern, drier environs of the Park by Fairall and Pienaar on 1960.05.12. A comparison of selected measurements (in mm) of this specimen with those of the holotype of *E. zuluensis* and of a specimen of *E. capensis* (CHIR.NKW 27 from Nwambiya Pan) are as follows: Length of forearm 30,8, 30,3 32,3; greatest length of skull, 12,6, 12,8, 14,2; crown length of maxillary tooththrow, 4,0, 4,3, 4,7; and breadth of palate at M3–M3, 4,8, 5,0, 5,7. The Aloe bat is characterized by small size, it being the smallest species of the genus in southern Africa, and a more inflated braincase that lacks the posterodorsal "helmet" in the area of the sagitto-lamdoideal crest that is characteristic of *E. capensis*.

Pienaar (1972) lists the Aloe bat as a possible future addition to the list of bats occurring in the Kruger National Park. However, judging from the localities plotted on the map of distribution of *Eptesicus capensis* in the Park (Pienaar 1964) this specimen of *E. zuluensis* was not included therein even though it was collected in May 1960. The two localities of

E. capensis from the northern regions of the Park are placed, from the map, as Nwambiya Pan and *circa* Nwashitsambe Roan Camp. Other localities plotted for *E. capensis* are Skukuza, Tswiriri dam and a place northeast of Tshokwane. Specimens of *E. capensis* have been examined with certainty by us from the Skukuza collection from only Tswiriri dam and Nwambiya Pan. Since their place of deposit is unknown to us, the identity of the specimens forming the basis of the other localities of *E. capensis* from the Park cannot be safely determined as either *E. capensis* or *E. zuluensis* but it may be assumed that some of these could be the Aloe bat as well. This is especially possible in view of the fact that an adult female *E. zuluensis* (TM 17293) taken on 1967.06.19 by Herbert, 11 km north of Newington is deposited in the Transvaal Museum. This locality is just outside of the southwestern boundary of the Park and would indicate a potential distribution of the Aloe bat throughout the Park.

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