

Black-bearded Tomb Bat *Taphozous melanopogon* at Kota Tinggi, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia

Noel THOMAS & Nick BAKER
noelthomas82@gmail.com (Thomas), nbaker@ecologyasia.com (Baker)

Observers: Noel Thomas, Vilma D'Rozario, Nick Baker.

Photographs by: Noel Thomas, Nick Baker.

Subject identified by: Nick Baker, Benjamin P. Y. H. Lee.

Location: Kota Tinggi, Johor, Peninsular Malaysia.

Elevation: 40 metres.

Habitat: Urban.

Date and time: (i) 06 November 2016, 18:05 hrs (ii) 13 November 2016, 15:00 hrs

Identity of subject: Black-bearded Tomb Bat, *Taphozous melanopogon* (Mammalia: Chiroptera: Emballonuridae).

Description of record: During a visit to a high-rise building in Kota Tinggi on 06 November a loud squeak revealed the presence of a pair of roosting *Taphozous melanopogon* (Fig. 1). A second visit was made to the same building on 13 November during which the roosting pair was found in the same location, and a brief search located two additional roosts, one comprising two bats and the other a single bat. All three roosts were located in relatively dark corners of the building, and above the fifth floor. The building is situated in the centre of Kota Tinggi, a small town on the Johor River. There is a 25-hectare patch of secondary scrub forest and oil palm 100 metres away from the roosts, an area of riverine mangrove around 1 kilometre away, and extensive lowland dipterocarp forest (part of the Gunung Pantii Forest Reserve) 9.5 kilometres distant.



Fig. 1.

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Fig. 2.

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Remarks: The bats are identified as *Taphozous melanopogon* based on (i) the shape of the head, particularly the pointed muzzle, (ii) a relatively long, free tail, (iii) pointed ears, (iv) a short, broad, trapezoid tragus and (v) a patch of black fur beneath the chin in both bats in the first roost (Fig. 1). A close-up of one of the bats from the first roost shows the extent of the black beard (Fig. 2.).

Males of this species usually have a black beard (the hairs of which are specialised and are related to the dispersal of glandular secretions), but this may not be obvious in younger bats (Kingston et al, 2006). Thus, both bats in the first roost (Fig. 1) are probably male. Some colour difference is apparent between the two bats.

Taphozous melanopogon is a widespread species, ranging through much of South Asia, southern China and Southeast Asia (Csorba et al, 2008). In addition to occurring in a wide variety of forest habitats, it is also known to roost in manmade structures including "old dilapidated buildings, dungeons of old forts, temples, old disused mines and tunnels" (Csorba et al, 2008).

References:

Csorba, G., Bumrungsri, S., Helgen, K., Francis, C., Bates, P., Gumal, M., Balete, D., Heaney, L., Molur, S. & Srinivasulu, C. (2008). *Taphozous melanopogon*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <www.iucnredlist.org/details/21461/0> (Accessed 22 November 2016).

Kingston, T., Lim, B. L. & Akbar, Z. (2006). Bats of Krau Wildlife Reserve. Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. 147 pp.