

**PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE
CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD
ANIMALS**

A. PROPOSAL: Inclusion of the African population of Schreiber's bat *Miniopterus schreibersii* on Appendix II.

B. PROPONENT: The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo¹.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

1. Taxon

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| 1.1. Class: | Mammalia |
| 1.1. Order: | Chiroptera |
| 1.2. Family: | Vespertilionidae |
| 1.3. Type/species/sub-species: | <i>Miniopterus schreibersii</i> (Kuhl, 1817) |
| 1.4. Common name: | English: Natal clinging bat, Schreiber's bent-winged bat
French: Minioptère de Schreibers
Spanish: Murciélago troglodita |

2. Biological data

2.1. Distribution

The species is present in Madagascar, in Africa and in Europe (Gunther, P., 2003). The bent-winged bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*) is present from southern Europe up to Japan, as well as the Solomon Islands, the Philippines, the north-west of Africa, in most of the countries in the southern Sahara, the north and north-east of Australia (Ronald *et al*, 1983).

The *Miniopterus* is present in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is also represented by the *Miniopterus inflatus* (Bat) species in Kahuzi-Biega National Park. Missions exploring the national parks of the Belgian Congo (Frechkop, Verschuren and others) have revealed a significant presence of bats amongst which is the bent-winged bat. An exhaustive study of all bibliographical and related literature provides further information on the *Miniopterus schreibersi* species in particular.

2.2. Population

The species is highly gregarious. Youngs of *Miniopterus schreibersii* were alone estimated to be 110,000 individuals at birth for a single reproduction cave between the beginning of November and the beginning of December (Van der Merwe, 1978 quoted by Ronald, 1983).

According to studies carried out by Lekagul and McNeely (1977), cited in Ronald *et al* (1983), in India, the population in a particular area tends to live in the middle of a large cave although the individuals also spend a lot of their time in secondary perches within a 70 km radius.

¹ Proposals for the inclusion of *M. schreibersii* on Appendix II have been submitted independently by the Governments of Bulgaria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malta and Ukraine. Contacted by the Secretariat, proponent governments have agreed to consider the proposal as having been submitted jointly. The proposals of the governments of Bulgaria, Kenya, Malta and Ukraine, submitted in the English language and based on a draft document examined by the Scientific Council at its 12th meeting were merged into a single document by the Secretariat (II/1a). This proposal was submitted by the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in French and contains information complementary to the one contained in the proposals submitted by the other governments. The Secretariat has decided to transmit it to the Parties as a separate document.

2.3. Habitat

The species gather together in colonies in the caves. This has particularly been observed in northern Transvaal, South Africa, in caves which are wintering sites and in places where these species gather in caves in the south when the bats return to their usual activity sites after wintering. This information is provided in Ronald *et al* (1983).

2.4. Migration

In its study carried out on this species in South Africa (according to Ronald *et al*, 1983), Van der Merwe (1975) has shown that the bats migrate on a seasonal basis. At the end of the winter and start of spring, the gestating females leave the caves in the south and return to Northern Transvaal in order to winter.

And, at the end of the summer, they return to the caves in the south with their young.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats

One laments the impact of the degradation of areas frequented by the species, both in forests and the savannah, following their destruction by man.

3.2. Habitat destruction

As stated above, their natural habitats have been exploited for farming, rearing, hunting, forestry, mining, tourism and fishing. These various environments are disturbed, causing undoubted harm to the species.

3.3. Indirect threats

The presence of and attacks by predators cannot be ignored, even though these are perfectly natural interactions within the ecosystems. Urban and rural settlements also present a risk through environmental pollution, whose effects are felt to a greater or lesser degree.

3.4. Threats connected especially with migration

In these cases, certain considerable obstacles arise during times of war through the occupation of stretches of the country by those engaged in warfare or by its victims or refugees. The species longs for its seasonal refuge, causing the population to stray and resulting in a significant number of deaths. Accidental or planned captures for the consumption of meat or other uses are also possible during their migrations, thus contributing to an increase in the mortality rate.

3.5. National and international use

On a national level, the bats that are eaten are the larger specimens. There also appear to be artistic uses, such as acoustic requirements. The membranes are used in producing drums as their echo provides better resonance. To a certain degree, there are even requests to collect guano in certain areas to be used as a natural fertiliser in farming.

On an international level, bat specimens are generally used for scientific purposes by museums and zoos around the world. Any other uses are generally medical. In specific terms, with regards to the species in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the concrete uses of the species in various parts of the country is not known and thus requires huge case studies in order to deal with all the difficulties and challenges presented in preserving the species.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1. National protection status

Until now we still do not have any information on the protection status of the species on the African Continent.

With regards to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular, the bats are protected by law in protected areas along with all other species of flora and fauna (Order No. 69-041 of 22 August 1969 relating to nature conservation). Outside the above mentioned conservation zones, they are at the mercy of poachers and all manner of unregulated attacks that may occur, as there is no framework strictly recommending that they be protected.

4.2. International protection status

The absence of national protection policies specific to bats in the majority of African countries to a certain degree clearly demonstrates the significant difficulty that prevails today in strengthening cooperation and the development of synergies between countries.

Until now, very little attention seems to have been granted to the species worldwide, leading to the conclusion that at the rate with which human pressures on the environment have increased, the species could become endangered.

4.3. Additional protection needs

For a better protection of the species, one must strengthen the capacities to assess and monitor the populations, supply appropriate materials for this purpose, carry out studies on its distribution and develop a realistic action plan.

One must promote training, create awareness amongst the local population and set up realistic projects involving the local communities.

The documentation must be made available to the players and bush equipment is required for exploration and monitoring purposes.

5. Range states

The species is present in Europe, Asia, Japan, the Solomon Islands, PHILIPPINES, Africa, AUSTRALIA, Madagascar and in the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

6. Comments from range states

The literature on bats worldwide is without doubt plentiful. Meanwhile, literature available in our country is relatively limited. It was therefore not available to us at the time this file was drafted for the Member States and this is a problem that needs to be addressed.

The quality of the information provided may of course be improved, where possible, at a later date.

7. Additional remarks

It would be good, if possible, to provide the Scientific Councillors with technical and scientific documentation, specifically guides on the zoological groups and even assessment solutions in order to achieve the CMS objectives.

8. References

- FRECHKOP, S., 1938. Mammifères. Exploration du Parc National Albert. Institut des Parcs Nationaux du Congo belge. Bruxelles, 103 pp.
- GUNRHER, P., 2003. Mammifères du monde. Inventaires des noms scientifiques français et anglais. Edition cadé. Paris, 376 pp.
- RONALD, M., NOWAK, JOHN, L., PARADISO, 1983. The Walker's Mammals of the World. 4 th Edition. Volume I. THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS. Baltimore and London. 568 pp.
- VERSCHUREN, J., 1957. Chéiroptères. Exploration du Parc National de la Garamba. Institut des Parcs Nationaux du Congo belge. Bruxelles, 173 pp.