

# Long-fingered bats of the genus *Miniopterus* (Chiroptera : Vespertilionidae) from Madagascar

by J.E. HILL

12, Penlee Close, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5NA, England, U.K.

*Summary.* – This paper reports and reviews bats of the genus *Miniopterus* from Madagascar. Further specimens of *M. minor manavi* and *M. schreibersii majori* are discussed and measured, and earlier informal records of *M. fraterculus* and *M. inflatus* are substantiated.

*Résumé.* – Cet article fait le point sur les chauves-souris du genre *Miniopterus* de Madagascar. De nouveaux spécimens de *M. minor manavi* et *M. schreibersii majori* sont considérés et mesurés et d'anciennes données concernant *M. fraterculus* et *M. inflatus* sont présentées et discutées.

## INTRODUCTION

The genus *Miniopterus* appears to have been reported initially from Madagascar by Dobson (1878) who listed smaller specimens as *M. scotinus* and larger examples as *M. schreibersii*. Subsequently Thomas (1906) also recognised two distinct Madagascan species, describing the smaller as *M. manavi* and larger as *M. majori*. Dorst (1947 *a, b*) discussed and keyed these, distinguishing them by the size difference to which Thomas (*loc. cit.*) had drawn attention, while Harrison (1953) compared them in some detail. Currently (Hayman and Hill 1971, Juste and Ibáñez 1992) *manavi* is considered to be a subspecies of the African *M. minor*, and *majori* is similarly referred to the widely distributed *M. schreibersii*. Harrison (1959) described a further insular subspecies from the region, *M. minor griveaudi*, from Grand Comoro (= Angazija) Island.

The holotypes of *manavi* and *majori* were selected from a small series of specimens (BM(NH) 97.9.1.37-44) in the collections of The Natural History Museum, London [formerly the British Museum (Natural History)], comprising five of the former and three of the latter, obtained by Dr. C.I. Forsyth Major. However, in 1976 the osteological collections of the Museum were found to include a further extensive series of specimens of Madagascan *Miniopterus* from Forsyth Major, evidently dating from 1895 or thereabouts, that had remained unprepared, unaccessed and apparently overlooked, perhaps since its arrival at the Museum. These specimens, many if not all seemingly collected from the floors of caves or similar shelters, had been mummified and attacked by insects, and are mostly very incomplete or partial skeletal remains. Nevertheless, they have yielded numerous skulls, together with the relics of wings from