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SMALL MAMMALS OF THE “FOCE DEL FIUME PLATANI” NATURE RESERVE
(SICILY, ITALY) AND A RECORD OF *HYPUSUGO SAVII* (BONAPARTE, 1837)
(*Mammalia Chiroptera*)

Micromammiferi della Riserva Naturale “Foce del Fiume Platani” (Sicilia, Italia) e ritrovamento di Hypsugo savii (Bonaparte, 1837) (Mammalia Chiroptera).

Eraclea Minoa is a small coastal village in southern Sicily, located between Agrigento and Sciacca. Most buildings, including the camping site are abandoned during autumn and winter, and therefore provide possible roosting space for bats. Although not included in the preserve area, the village is adjacent to the protected “Foce del Fiume Platani” Nature Reserve and the surrounding habitat is a continuation of that found in the reserve zones: cultivated areas (vineyards and crop fruit plantations), as well as patches of uncultivated wet areas overgrown with reed (*Phragmites australis*). Chalk cliffs border the area. There is a clearly lined set of vegetation from sea to inland: (1) sandy shore, (2) small dunes with saline brush vegetation, (3) forest area of *Eucalyptus* and *Pinus* plantation, (4) rocky area with crops, and (5) cliff.

In 2001-2003 (late summer and autumn), I have recorded, by observation and short-time live-trapping sessions (on average: 15 traps x 3 nights) the following small mammals in the vicinity of the “Foce del Fiume Platani” Nature Reserve. The house rat (*Rattus rattus*) was a common species observed in the forest area, where it uses the village’s telephone and electricity lines, in order to cross from one pine tree to another for foraging. The remains of the eaten pines can be found below the pine trees all over the village. Also, individuals of wild populations of the house mouse (*Mus domesticus*) were live-trapped in the adjacent reeds along the Platani River. Within the short time of trapping, the wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) as well as the garden dormouse (*Eliomys quercinus*), and shrews (*Crocidura sicula* and *Suncus etruscus*) were not trapped, but could be present in the area (MITCHELL-JONES *et al.*, 1999; SARÀ, 2000). Found road kills (2002-2003) include the weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) and the hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). Mammalian predators, like the fox and feral cats are present. Observed nocturnally active avian predators on small mammals were two owl species (*Tyto alba* and *Otus scops*).

On 26 September 2001, a specimen of Savi’s pipistrelle, *Hypsugo savii* (Bonaparte, 1837), was found on the road of the village. This bat species is common, but vulnerable, in southern and central Europe (MITCHELL-JONES *et al.*, 1999), where it is known to roost in crevices of rocks (SPITZEN-

BERGER, 2001). In Sicily and some surrounding islands (Ustica and Vulcano) FORNASARI *et al.* (1997) and MITCHELL-JONES *et al.* (1999) considered it as present, because they included few rare and old (1869-1967) distributional data or recordings based on bat detector. To date, AGNELLI *et al.* (2004), considering only the records for the period 1980-2000, do not mention its presence in their "Atlas of Italian Bats". This specimen of *Hypsugo savii* found in Eraclea Minoa is therefore the first recent record available for Sicily.

The specimen of *Hypsugo savii* is deposited in the Vienna Museum of Natural History (NMW 64055); location: Eraclea Minoa, Sicily, Italy (N 37/24' - E 13/17'); sex: female; weight: 4 g; head-body-length: 44 mm; tail: 33.2 mm; ear: 11.7 mm; antebrachium: 30.7/31.5 mm (data AM).

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