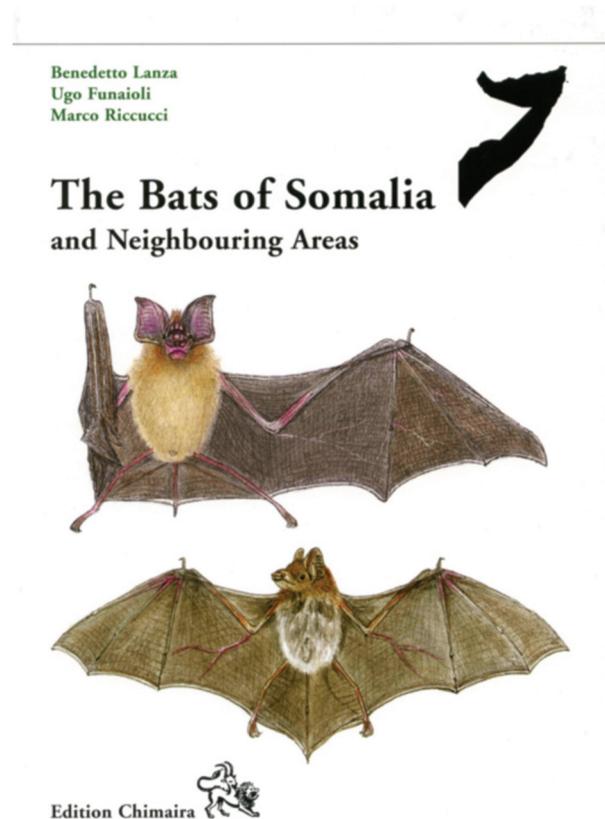


Lanza B, Funaioli U & Riccucci M (2015) *The Bats of Somalia and Neighbouring Areas*. Frankfurt Contributions to Natural History 60, Edition Chimaira, Frankfurt/M., 566 pp. ISBN 978-3-89973-447-8. Price: € 78,-.

In this voluminous book the authors cover every aspect of the 79 bat species they found associated with Somalia and adjacent areas. There are introductory chapters to the order Chiroptera (with key to the two suborders), suborder Megachiroptera, followed by suborder Microchiroptera with a key to the families, then family with key to the genera, and genus with keys to the species, before each species is discussed individually. Each of these chapters follows a similar structure with “derivatio nominis” (name derivations and etymology), “composition and distribution”, and “distinctive characters”. Family and genus chapters add paragraphs on “type genus [species]”, “iconography” (= a listing of the figures associated with that chapter), “synonymy” and “common names”, “taxonomy”, “echolocation calls,” where available, “biology”, “Somali records” and “Personal observations.” Within this pattern the authors provide a great amount of detail on the species, all illustrated with a color drawing of the bat with one wing outstretched (sometimes replaced by color photographs of mounted specimens), up to three (!) sets of pen-and-ink skull drawings per species, nicely showing individual variation, and variously photographs or drawings of penis, bacula, palatal ridges, or details of dentition, skull, tragi or noseleaves depending on the family’s special characteristics. Quite a bit of information is contained in the name derivations, from the Greek and Latin roots to interesting details on naturalists or hunter-collectors the bat may be named after, and - where available - the bat’s biology. Common names listed include English and Italian names but no local Somali names. Well-organized tables identify many of the individual measurements of the 3650 museum specimens examined, all given with museum acronyms and numbers, and summary statistics.

At the end of the book, under “Addenda,” two species, *Kerivoula smithii* and *Laephotis wintoni* are added as “occurring in areas nearby Somalia”, followed by 32 detailed distribution maps, some of which covering more than one species, with numbered point localities, all of which identified by name (!) in separate legends. This is then followed by the Acknowledgements, a detailed six-page Gazetteer with many useful spelling variants and 16 pages of References including literature as recent as some of the species entries from Happold and Happold’s 2013 bat volume in the new *Mammals of Africa* series, which is greatly complemented by this new book.

As if this wasn’t enough, the book concludes with a separate section by Funaioli and Lanza entitled “An outline of the geography of Somalia” that provides the smaller distribution maps in the main section with much more detail



regarding political subdivisions, average yearly rains, and a “Sketch map of the vegetation [zones] of the Somali Democratic Republic,” the latter nicely illustrated with one black & white and 17 color photographs and some more general information on flora and fauna of Somalia. A separate reference section concludes this chapter, which is especially valuable, as it is next to impossible to travel safely in Somalia at this time.

If there was ever a modern “Rolls Royce”- equivalent of a “Bats of ...”-book, with all the possible bells and whistles, this must be it. Yet, the publisher, Edition Chimaira, somehow managed to accommodate every lavish aspect of this book and seemingly all special wishes of the authors in a still portable size, printed on durable glossy paper, which does justice to all the different types of illustrations, but keeps the price for this rather specialized books within reasonable limits. May this volume find its way to all those interested in Somalia or the fauna of the Horn of Africa in general and bats in particular, and may it serve as an exemplarily illustrated and detailed account for this part of Africa, both areas where the bat-volume of Kingdon’s *Mammals of Africa* falls short.

Jan Decher, Section of Mammalogy, ZFMK