

Observations on the Forest Dormouse, *Dryomys nitedula* (Pallas, 1779) (Rodentia: Gliridae), in Syria

by Adwan H. Shehab, Osama Mouhra, Mohammad A. Abu Baker,
and Zuhair S. Amr

Abstract. A new distribution locality for the Forest Dormouse, *Dryomys nitedula*, is reported from Ashrafiat Al Wade in the Barada River valley, northwest of Damascus. The specimens are morphologically similar to the Arabian and Turkish populations. Some ecological and biological aspects are discussed.

Kurzfassung. Vom Baumschläfer, *Dryomys nitedula*, wird aus Ashrafiat Al Wade im Tal des Barada-Flusses nordwestlich von Damaskus ein neuer Fundort gemeldet. Die Exemplare sind morphologisch jenen aus Arabien und der Türkei sehr ähnlich. Einige ökologische und biologische Beobachtungen werden mitgeteilt.

Key words. Morphology, biology, distribution, taxonomy, Syria, Middle East.

Introduction

The genus *Dryomys* is represented in Arabia by a single species, the Forest Dormouse, *D. nitedula*. This species has been reported from Syria and the neighbouring countries including Palestine, Iraq and Turkey (NEVO & AMIR 1961, 1964, LEHMAN 1965, ATALLAH 1978, KUMERLOEVE 1975, JAWDAT 1977, HARRISON & BATES 1991, KRYŠTUFEK & VORHALIK 1994, QUMSIYEH 1996, YIĞIT et al. 2002). The only record of its presence in Syria was that by LEHMAN (1965) from Kastel Maaf and Slenfe in the coastal region.

This paper presents a new record of *D. nitedula* from southern Syria and observations on its distribution, morphology and ecology.

Material and methods

Rodents were collected using Sherman folding live-traps (23x9x9cm) installed on branches of trees and over the roofs of rural houses. Traps baited with mixed oatmeal and peanut butter were set for one or two consecutive nights at each site; they were set in the late afternoon and checked in the early morning hours.

Four external (HB, T, HF and E) and fourteen cranial measurements (GtL, ZB, IC, BB, BD, NL, Dia, ForI, SH, MXC, MDC, M, MB, TB) were taken from six adult specimens using a caliper of 0.02 mm accuracy according to HARRISON & BATES (1991). Skull and dental illustrations were made under a camera lucida.

Skin and skull specimens are deposited at the Department of Animal Pests, General Commission for Agricultural and Scientific Research (GCASR), Damascus-Syria, and the Jordan