

EFFECTS OF NATURE ON MIST NETTING FOR DOMINICAN BATS

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yielded two *pteropus davyi*.

DISCUSSION

In past years twelve species of bats have been discovered on Dominica. There are numerous reports of bats being captured through the use of nets. A report by Paul Carvan in 1991 and Bats of the West Indian Island of Dominica: Natural History and Areographic Perspectives are a couple of examples. This project, however, has apparently fallen short of expectations presented from the past. As there is a lack of precedent for this outcome, the causes to such results can only be speculation. There are a few ideas that come to mind when looking at the situation as a whole.

One of the difficulties with this project is the size of the nets. The common size net for this type of operation is twelve meters. Six meter and nine meter nets were used. The true problem isn't the length, however, it is the height. As observed in the cultivation area around nets A and E, the insect eating bats feed and fly well above the range of the nets. Their highest activity time in that area was 1845-1910. Even as thier height varied all were too high to be caught in the nets.

Another noteworthy observation is the effects of the rising moon. As the moonlight reached a certain area bat activity decreased immensely. As time progressed the moon rose approximately forty-five minutes later each evening. In addition to the moon, the weather played an important role. There appeared to be less activity in the threat of an oncoming shower, cloud cover, or change in air pressure.

The most suprising observation was the apparent ability of the bats to locate the net in time to miss being caught. This was most obvious at net H and net A after it was moved to the veranda. Bats are well known for thier extremely sensitive echolocation ability (Wilson, 1997). In years past insect eating bats were usually caught over water sources. In the process of drinking or feeding they were to low to clear the nets in time. This project saw bats feeding on insects under the veranda, going in and out over the nets, hovering in front of the nets and then going over, and flying to the side of the nets. This occured to often for it to be chance.

As a whole this type of project would yield better results with nets having the option of greater height as well as length in order to cover an entire flyway. Putting up a greater number of nets in different locations might also be beneficial. The best way to catch something is to know how it lives. Observation of the bats, although not the original objective in this project, gives clues that may benefit researchers in the future. Hopefully mist netting in the future will yield better results.

WORK CITED

Wilson, Don E. Bats in Question. 1997. Smithsonian Institution Press. Washington and London.