

**ROOST SELECTION OF THE SHORT-NOSED FRUIT BAT,  
*Cynopterus* spp. IN SRI LANKA**

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**ABSTRACT**

A total of 160 day roosts of short nosed fruit bats (*Cynopterus* sp.) were examined during a 3 year study in Sri Lanka. Day roosts were found in five species of trees; Talipot palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*), Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), Banana (*Musa* sp.), H abarala (*Alocasia* sp.) and Kitul (*Caryota urens*). All the day roosts found in this study can be categorized in to three groups, viz, tents, foliage roosts and seed string roosts. Majority (92%) of day roosts were in the form of tents, all of which were found in the talipot palm. Foliage roosts (7%) were found in three species of plants (*C. nucifera*, *Musa* sp., *Alocasia* sp.) while two (1%) of the roosts were found in Kitul palm, inside the seed strings. Our observations indicate that the tents are constructed by male bats and serve as the primary roosts of the *Cynopterus*.

**Key words:** *Cynopterus*, Chiroptera, day roosts, tents, *Corypha umbraculifera*

**INTRODUCTION**

Bats form one of the most successful orders of mammals in Sri Lanka (Bates & Harrison, 1997). With 30 species, they account for over 1/3 of the mammalian species in the island (Phillips, 1980; Bates & Harrison, 1997). Both suborders of the order Chiroptera are well represented in the island with 4 species of megachiropterans and 26 species of microchiropterans. All living megachiropterans belong to a single family, Pteropodidae. This family is represented by 4 species in Sri Lanka, the common flying foxes (*Pteropus giganteus*), dog faced bats (*Rousettus leschenaulti*) and short nosed fruit bats (*Cynopterus* spp.).

Short nosed fruit bats are a widely distributed megachiropteran throughout India, Malaysia, China, Philippine, Indonesia, Timor and Sri Lanka (Brosset, 1962; Goodwin, 1979; Phillips, 1980; Balasingh *et al.*, 1995, Bates & Harrison 1997). Although it is claimed that there are two species in this genus in Sri Lanka, taxonomic status of the *Cynopterus* species complex was a subject of controversy and confusion. However, recent studies with multivariate morphometrics and mitochondrial DNA sequence