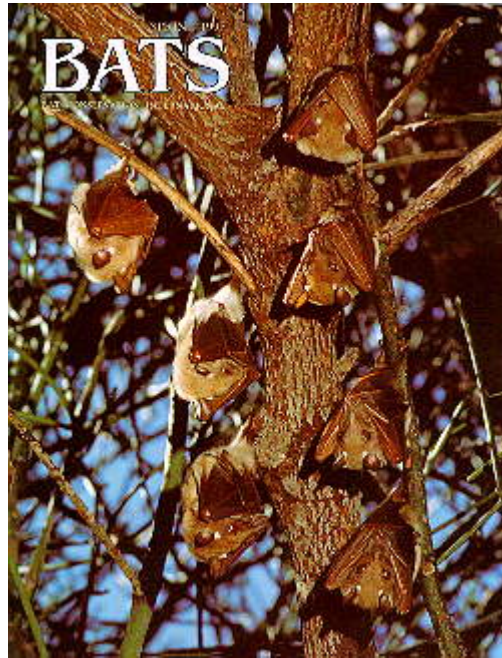


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On the Cover

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Epauleted bats (*Epomophorus* sp.) are often found roosting along the branches of mango, palm, or other thick-foliaged trees in Africa. They are known to congregate in groups of up to 150, but they also roost alone or in smaller groups. These bats inhabit a wide swath across the central region of Africa, and they depend on a large variety of native plants for their fruit and nectar diet.

The name "epauleted bat" is derived from the retractable patches of fur on the shoulders of the males. These patches are used solely for sexual attraction and are otherwise retracted into shoulder pouches. During courtship, glands in the pouches are believed to secrete attractive odors, which the male's long epaulet hairs and beating wings help waft to cruising females. At the same time, the male bat emits loud and rapid honking noises, audible for 200 yards or more. Males sometimes maintain this demanding courting dance for many hours, competing with each other for female attention.

Photo by Merlin D. Tuttle

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