**Glauconycteris superba**  
**Pied Butterfly Bat (Superb Butterfly Bat)**

Fr. Glauconyctère pie; Ger. Schwarzweiße Schmetterlingsfledermaus

**Taxonomy**  

**Description**  
Small microbat (spectacularly black and white) without noseleaf and with tail more or less fully enclosed in interfemoral membrane; four upper and five lower cheekteeth and two upper incisors on each side; ears separated, short for a vespertilionid (ca. 13 mm), subquadrangular; wings blackish (not conspicuously reticulated); dorsal pelage black, strikingly marked with white spots and stripes including three spots on the head; rostrum elongated and flattened (cf. other *Glauconycteris*). Medium-sized for a vespertilionid and the largest *Glauconycteris*. Sexual dimorphism: no information.

Pelage dense, soft; mid-dorsal hairs 6–7 mm. Dorsal pelage black with white markings comprising one spot on the nose and two on forehead next to each ear, a backward-pointing subtriangular band on each side of mid-dorsal line (from shoulder-blade to mid-back), a narrow dorsal flank-stripe on each side, and either three spots in a row or one short line on each shoulder (Figure 126d–f). Ventral pelage with broad white band across throat, extending laterally to shoulders and then along each side of belly to anal region, leaving chin, flanks and mid-ventral area black. Dorsal and ventral hairs reddish to dark brown with black tip, or pure white. Ears long for the genus, subquadrangular. Tragus very broad, posterior margin distinctly curved with small basal lobule (Figure 124f). Wing-membranes dorsally blackish and without reticulation, ventrally with pale reticulation. Interfemoral membrane dorsally blackish, ventrally pale grey. Elbows, knees and ankles either black or pale. Tibia long for this genus (21 mm). Tail ca. 79% of HB.

Skull comparatively very large and robust for a *Glauconycteris*; profile of forehead region (viewed laterally) strongly concave (Figure 127a). Braincase high; sagittal crest weakly developed; lambdoid crest moderately developed. Rostrum conspicuously flattened and (viewed laterally) forming a sharp angle with braincase in frontal region. Inner upper incisor unicuspid. Lower incisors tricuspid (some with trace of fourth cusp) and crowded.

**Geographic Variation**  
Based on differences in colour pattern, Hayman (1946b) described *sheila* as a subspecies, but Rosevear (1965) suggested that pattern is possibly as variable in *G. superba* as in other *Glauconycteris* species, that the pattern described for *sheila* is not necessarily restricted to West Africa, and that the validity of *sheila* as a subspecies is dubious.

**Similar Species**  
None. No other *Glauconycteris* has conspicuous white markings on its head and ventral pelage.

**Distribution**  
Endemic to Africa. Known from only three localities in the Rainforest BZ (Western and East Central Regions). The record from Côte d'Ivoire, examined by Peterson & Smith (1973), is based on a single specimen from Matonguiné supposedly in the RMCA collection (J. Eger pers. comm.), which could not be found upon request (W. Van Neer pers. comm.). The record by Kingdon (1974) from Budongo Forest, Uganda, is disregarded here as the specimen illustrated by the author apparently does not represent *G. superba*.

**Habitat**  
The records from Matonguiné, Côte d'Ivoire (07º 18'N, 08º 04'W) and Oda, Ghana (05º 55'N, 00º 59'W) are located in the region of semi-deciduous forest at the periphery of evergreen lowland rainforest at ca. 360 m and 190 m, respectively. The type
locality – Pawa, DR Congo (02° 32’ N, 27° 42’ E) – is situated in the NE Congolian lowland rainforest at ca. 700 m.

**Abundance**  Apparently very rare and local; only one specimen known from each of three localities.

**Remarks**  The specimen from Ghana was found on the ground but still alive by G. S. Cansdale. No other information.

**Conservation**  IUCN Category: Least Concern.

Apparently very rare, only three localities and specimens known; area of occupancy very restricted. The specimens originated from areas that are nowadays heavily degraded and fragmented, especially in West Africa. Major threat: loss of habitat as result of logging and agriculture. Population size unknown but population trend inferred to be declining. Based on this information, categorization as Least Concern seems very misleading; a threatened category or Data Deficient would be more appropriate.

**Measurements**

*Glauconycteris superba*

- FA: 46.1 (45–48) mm, n = 3
- WS: n. d.
- TL: 88, 112 mm, n = 2
- T: 39, 49 mm, n = 2
- E: 13 mm, n = 1
- Tr: 7.5 mm, n = 1
- Tib: 21, 21 mm, n = 2
- HF: 8.3 mm, n = 1
- WT: n. d.
- GLS: 16.4 (16.2–16.5) mm, n = 3
- GWS: 11.3 (11.0–11.9) mm, n = 3
- C″-M″: 6.0 (5.8–6.2) mm, n = 3

Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, DR Congo (BMNH [holotype *sheila*], RMCA [incl. holotype *superba*], J. Eger pers. comm.)

**Key References**  Hayman 1939, 1946b; Rosevear 1965.