First record of the Dollman's tree mouse (*Prionomys batesi;* Mammalia: Nesomyidae) in the Republic of Congo and additional description of this rare Central African rodent

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Abstract

We present new data on the poorly known rodent *Prionomys batesi* Dollman, 1910. Recently, five specimens of this species were collected in Odzala National Park, which represent the first record of this species in Republic of Congo. These new captures, combined with the preparation of 15 specimens from Central African Republic allowed us to complete the morphological description of the species as well as, for the first time, to document intraspecific variability. This species is actually known from three countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic and Republic of Congo) and four localities (Bitye, Obala, La Maboké and Odzala). It seems to be restricted to areas of forest-savannah mosaic where the forest is actually colonising the savannah.

Key words: *Prionomys,* Dendromurinae, Biogeography, Morphometry, Africa, Rodentia

Introduction

Prionomys batesi Dollman, 1910, is a small rodent only known by a restricted number of specimens collected in three localities. This monospecific genus was described by Dollman (1910) from a single specimen captured in Bitye in South Cameroon. This genus remained poorly known during more than 50 years, until its rediscovery by Petter (1964, 1966) in La Maboké (Central African Republic -CAR-). More recently, Musser and Carleton (1993, 2005) noted the capture of a specimen in West Cameroon (55 km NE of Obala).

Currently, *Prionomys* is considered to be a member of the Dendromurinae (Musser and Carleton, 2005), and within that subfamily morphologically clusters with