

low temperatures does not differ in white from dark coloured rats, shows that melanism does not have any beneficial effect over non-melanistic forms. However, no opinion can be given on this aspect as my observations are based on dead specimens.

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ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,
8, LINDSAY STREET,
CALCUTTA-16,
November 24, 1971.

T. P. BHATTACHARYYA

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4. THE 'DAY NEST' OF A RAT

Our house has mosquito netting in the windows. Outside one first-floor bedroom window grows a creeper which we believe is the Rangoon Creeper (*Quisqualis indica*). It has sweet pink and red flowers, fragrant in the evenings. There are some dead branches of the creeper close to the window. On these a few months ago a platform of twigs roughly 5 inches long appeared. For some days we saw no creature near it, but one day we saw a large male rat with a long tail, stretched out upon it. As we were close to the window and looked, he got a bit nervous and slowly got off the platform and hid beneath it. This rat continued to be all day long on this platform for at least a week. Then he disappeared and we wondered if he had been sick and had died. But about a week later, we noticed some activity and saw that the rat had plucked off some leafy twigs from the creeper and arranged them all around the platform and was again lying there, partially hidden from us by the leaves. As the leaves withered, he plucked off more twigs and replaced them. He lay there for over a week in this way and appeared most of the time to be sleeping. Then he again disappeared.

For many weeks we did not see him at all. Then on Wednesday, November 29, I entered the room and to my surprise the rat was there ! It was about 1 p.m. He looked fatter than before, his fur in very good condition. The platform on which he lay was in a sorry state after weeks of disuse, but on Wednesday he brought no twigs and did not repair it in any way.

When my husband returned about 6 p.m., I showed him the rat and it was still there after 10 p.m. when we went to bed, but the following morning it was not there and has not been seen since. This is its briefest visit so far.

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December 1, 1972.

M. P. WALKEY

5. ALBINISM IN THE LESSER RAT-TAILED BAT,
RHINOPOMA H. HARDWICKEI GRAY
(CHIROPTERA : RHINOPOMATIDAE)

Allen (BATS 1939, p. 154) has mentioned a few cases of albinism in a few species of bats with the remarks that both albinism and melanism are rare in bats. No case of albinism came to my notice in the Indian species during examination of over four thousand specimens belonging to several species particularly from Central India. On 26th April, 1972, however, a beautiful albino adult female of the Lesser Rat-tailed Bat was collected alive along with others from a colony of about 100 individuals in caves under granite boulders near Jabalpur city. The general pelage, the wing membranes, the metacarpals, the phalanges and the ears are white or dirty white. The legs, the feet, the arms, the tail, the face, the chin and the throat are pinkish. The colour of eyes was not noted in the living specimen but in the dead specimen it is blackish. The specimen has been exhibited in the departmental museum. The specimen was kept in captivity along with other specimens for a few hours but died during night possibly because of an injury on the chest. Some parts of it were found eaten by ants during night. It kept aloof from other specimens in captivity.

Recently a friend reported that he collected an albino of *Hipposideros* sp. from a large colony in a cave in another district of Madhya Pradesh.

183/581, SOUTH CIVIL LINES,
JABALPUR,
June 26, 1972,

H. KHAJURIA



Walkey, M. P. 1973. "The Day Nest of a Rat." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 70, 196–197.

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