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## The Status of *Prionailurus bengalensis alleni* Sody

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Recently H. J. V. Sody proposed the subspecific name *Prionailurus bengalensis alleni* for specimens in the American Museum of Natural History, not seen by him, of a tiger cat from Hainan, China (1949, *Treubia*, vol. 20, pt. 2, p. 181). His knowledge of the animal seems to be based entirely on the account and measurements published by Glover M. Allen (1938, *The mammals of China and Mongolia*, Natural history of central Asia, vol. 11, pt. 1, p. 461) under the name *Felis bengalensis chinensis*.

Because Sody refers to the four males and three females listed by Allen as the type series without mentioning a specific individual, it seems advisable to select a type specimen from the original series and give a detailed description.

The specimen described below is assigned as the type of

### *Prionailurus bengalensis alleni* Sody

TYPE: A.M.N.H. No. 59961, skin and skull, adult male; Nodoo, Hainan, China; collector, Clifford Pope, Third Asiatic Expedition; May 26, 1923; original no. 1209. The type is a flat skin in good condition; skull complete, sutures closed, teeth showing little wear; largest in the type series.

GENERAL CHARACTERS: A medium-sized spotted cat similar to the mainland form, *Prionailurus b. chinensis*, but averaging smaller, and with relatively shorter nasals and lighter dentition.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPE: Basic ground color of upper parts Light Buff,<sup>1</sup> darkened by the admixture of dark-tipped hairs. The color pattern is as follows: There are two narrow Mummy Brown stripes on the side of the head, one commencing at the posterior corner of the eye, the other just below the eye, both stripes passing back along the side of the jaw and enclosing a white area between them; the lower stripe is continuous across the throat with the corresponding stripe of the opposite side. There are four Mummy Brown collar stripes across the lower throat; a short conspicuous white stripe borders the inner edge of the eye. Five narrow Mummy Brown stripes extend from between the eyes along the back of the neck to the shoulders, the median line becoming obsolete on the back of the head; the outer two broaden posteriorly and break up into small lengthwise blotches over the shoulders, the inner pair also becoming interrupted on shoulders; from here they are traceable as continuous pairs of broken lines to the base of the tail. The sides of the body are marked by about six irregular longitudinal rows of small, elongate, dark spots. Below and inner sides of limbs white, with a number of relatively large Mummy Brown spots which tend to arrange themselves in five transverse rows across the chest and upper abdomen. Tail dull Light Buff with about 12 Mummy Brown rings broken into small, irregular, elongate spots and lines, extreme tip Mummy Brown; ears blackish, with a conspicuous Light Buff spot in the middle.

Skull similar to that of *P. b. chinensis* from the mainland but smaller, narrower, and with weaker dentition.

MEASUREMENTS OF TYPE: Skin (dry): total length, 830 mm.; length of tail, 220; hind foot, including foot bones, 110. Skull: greatest length, 92.5 mm.; condylobasal length, 84.2; basal length, 77.8; palatal length, 36.5; zygomatic breadth, 56.7; mastoid breadth, 37.2; width of palate across molars, 32.7; median length of nasals, 18.5; crown length of upper carnassial along outer edge, 10.2; length of upper tooth row, c-m<sup>1</sup>, 28.5.

REMARKS: Sody justified the separation of the Hainan tiger cat from the mainland form solely on the slightly smaller average size of the skull and the trifle shorter nasals. Glover M. Allen considered these differences nothing more than a local variation and not of sufficient importance to warrant the recognition of a named form.

A comparison of the mainland and Hainan specimens on hand does show a tendency in the latter to have the color pattern broken up into smaller spots, and the dentition, especially the upper carnassial, is rela-

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<sup>1</sup> Capitalized color terms are after Ridgway, "Color standards and color nomenclature," Washington, D. C., 1912.

tively weaker. The tails of the Hainan specimens are also shorter than those from the mainland. However, until a comprehensive revision of the species *bengalensis* is possible, *Prionailurus bengalensis alleni* Sody may be regarded as a named form inhabiting the island of Hainan.

I am indebted to Dr. David H. Johnson of the United States National Museum for bringing Sody's type description of this new subspecies to my attention.

