



# Bat Facts

- More than 1,250 species of bats account for about 20% of all mammal species, and most are highly beneficial.
- Bats play essential roles in keeping populations of night-flying insects in balance worldwide.
- A single little brown bat can catch more than 1,000 mosquito-sized insects in just one hour.
- A colony of 150 big brown bats can protect farmers from up to 33 million rootworms each summer.
- The millions of Mexican free-tailed bats from Bracken Cave in Texas eat tons of insects nightly.
- Bats are key elements in rainforest ecosystems, which rely on them to pollinate flowers and disperse seeds for countless trees and shrubs.
- In the wild, important agricultural plants, from bananas, breadfruit and mangoes to cashews, dates and figs, rely on bats for

pollination and seed dispersal.

- Desert ecosystems rely on nectar-feeding bats as primary pollinators of giant cacti, including the famous organ pipe and saguaro of Arizona.
- Tequila is produced from agave plants that in the wild rely on bats as their primary pollinators.
- Bat droppings in caves support whole ecosystems of unique organisms, including bacteria useful in detoxifying wastes, improving detergents, and producing gasohol and antibiotics.
- An anticoagulant from vampire bat saliva led to the development of a new treatment for human stroke patients.
- Contrary to popular misconceptions, bats are not blind, do not become entangled in human hair and seldom transmit disease to other animals or humans.
- All mammals can contract rabies; however, the vast majority of bats do not; even

bats that do contract the disease will normally bite only in self-defense. They pose little threat to people who do not handle them.

- Bats are exceptionally vulnerable to extinction, in part because they are the slowest-reproducing mammals on Earth for their size. Most produce only one pup per year.
- More than 50 percent of American bat species are endangered or declining sufficiently to warrant special concern. Losses are occurring at alarming rates worldwide.
- Loss of bats increases demand for chemical pesticides, can jeopardize whole ecosystems of other animal and plant species and can harm human economies.
- White-nose Syndrome is a devastating new bat disease that is causing the most precipitous decline of North American wildlife in the past century. WNS threatens to decimate bat populations across the continent, as mortality at some sites has approached 100%.

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- ✈ The world's smallest mammal is the bumblebee bat of Thailand. It weighs less than a penny.
- ✈ Giant flying foxes that live in Indonesia have wingspans of up to six feet.
- ✈ The Brandt's myotis of Eurasia is the world's longest-lived mammal for its size, with a lifespan that sometimes exceeds 38 years.
- ✈ Mexican free-tailed bats sometimes fly up to two miles high to feed or to catch tailwinds that carry them over long distances at speeds of more than 60 miles per hour.
- ✈ The pallid bat of western North America is immune to the stings of the scorpions and centipedes on which it feeds.
- ✈ Tiny woolly bats in West Africa live in the large webs of colonial spiders.
- ✈ Fishing bats have echolocation so sophisticated that they can detect a minnow's fin, as fine as a human hair, protruding only two millimeters above a pond's surface.

- ✈ African heart-nosed bats can hear the footsteps of a beetle walking on sand from a distance of more than six feet.
- ✈ Red bats, which live in tree foliage throughout most of North America, can withstand body temperatures as low as 23 degrees F during winter hibernation.
- ✈ The Honduran white bat is snow white with a yellow nose and ears. It cuts large leaves to make "tents" for protection from jungle rains.
- ✈ Frog-eating bats identify edible from poisonous frogs by listening to the mating calls of the males. Frogs counter by hiding and using short, difficult-to-locate calls.
- ✈ Disk-winged bats of Latin America have adhesive disks on both wings and feet that enable them to live in unfurling banana leaves. They can even walk up a windowpane.
- ✈ Vampire bats adopt orphans and have been known to risk their lives to share food with less fortunate roostmates.

- ✈ Male epauletted bats have pouches in their shoulders which contain large, showy patches of white fur that they flash during courtship to attract mates.
- ✈ Mother Mexican free-tailed bats find and nurse their own young, even in huge colonies where many millions of babies cluster at up to 500 individuals per square foot.



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