

= Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat =

Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat (*Craseonycteris thonglongyai*) , also known as the bumblebee bat , is a vulnerable species of bat and the only extant member of the family Craseonycteridae . It occurs in western Thailand and southeast Burma , where it occupies limestone caves along rivers .

Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat is the smallest species of bat and arguably the world 's smallest mammal . It has a reddish @-@ brown or grey coat , with a distinctive pig @-@ like snout . Colonies range greatly in size , with an average of 100 individuals per cave . The bat feeds during short activity periods in the evening and dawn , foraging around nearby forest areas for insects . Females give birth annually to a single offspring .

Although the bat 's status in Burma is not well known , the Thai population is restricted to a single province and may be at risk for extinction . Its potential threats are primarily anthropogenic , and include habitat degradation and the disturbance of roosting sites .

= = Description = =

Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat is about 29 to 33 mm (1 @.@ 1 to 1 @.@ 3 in) in length and 2 g (0 @.@ 071 oz) in mass. hence the common name of " bumblebee bat " . It is the smallest species of bat and may be the world 's smallest mammal , depending on how size is defined . The main competitors for the title are small shrews ; in particular , the Etruscan shrew may be lighter at 1 @.@ 2 to 2 @.@ 7 g (0 @.@ 042 to 0 @.@ 095 oz) but is longer , measuring 36 to 53 mm (1 @.@ 4 to 2 @.@ 1 in) from its head to the base of the tail .

The bat has a distinctive swollen , pig @-@ like snout with thin , vertical nostrils . Its ears are relatively large , while its eyes are small and mostly concealed by fur . Its teeth are typical of an insectivorous bat . The dental formula is 1 : 1 : 1 : 3 in the upper jaw and 2 : 1 : 2 : 3 in the lower jaw , with large upper incisors .

The bat 's upperparts are reddish @-@ brown or grey , while the underside is generally paler . The wings are relatively large and darker in colour , with long tips that allow the bat to hover . Despite having two caudal vertebrae , Kitti 's Hog @-@ nosed Bat has no visible tail . There is a large web of skin between the hind legs (the uropatagium) which may assist in flying and catching insects , although there are no tail bones or calcars to help control it in flight .

= = Range and distribution = =

Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat occupies the limestone caves along rivers , within dry evergreen or deciduous forests . In Thailand , Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat is restricted to a small region of the Tenasserim Hills in Sai Yok District , Kanchanaburi Province , within the drainage basin of the Khwae Noi River . While the Sai Yok National Park in the Dawna Hills contains much of the bat 's range , some Thai populations occur outside the park and are therefore unprotected .

Since the 2001 discovery of a single individual in Burma , at least nine separate sites have been identified in the limestone outcrops of the Dawna and Karen Hills outside the Thanlwin , Ataran , and Gyaing Rivers of Kayin and Mon States . The Thai and Burmese populations are morphologically identical , but their echolocation calls are distinct . It is not known whether the two populations are reproductively isolated .

= = Behaviour = =

Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat roosts in the caves of limestone hills , far from the entrance . While many caves contain only 10 to 15 individuals , the average group size is 100 , with a maximum of about 500 . Individuals roost high on walls or roof domes , far apart from each other . Bats also undertake seasonal migration between caves .

Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat has a brief activity period , leaving its roost for only 30 minutes in the evening and 20 minutes at dawn . These short flights are easily interrupted by heavy rain or cold

temperatures . During this period , the bat forages within fields of cassava and kapok or around the tops of bamboo clumps and teak trees , within one kilometre of the roosting site . The wings seem to be shaped for hovering flight , and the gut contents of specimens include spiders and insects that are presumably gleaned off foliage . Nevertheless , most prey is probably caught in flight . Main staples of the bat 's diet include small flies (Chloropidae , Agromyzidae , and Anthomyiidae) , hymenopterans , and psocopterans .

Late in the dry season (around April) of each year , females give birth to a single offspring . During feeding periods , the young either stays in the roost or remains attached to the mother at one of her two vestigial pubic nipples .

= = Taxonomy = =

Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat is the only extant species in the family Craseonycteridae , which is grouped in the superfamily Rhinolophoidea as a result of molecular testing . Based on this determination , the bat 's closest relatives are members of the families Hipposideridae and Rhinopomatidae .

Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat was unknown to the world at large prior to 1974 . Its common name refers to its discoverer , Thai zoologist Kitti Thonglongya . Thonglongya worked with a British partner , John E. Hill , in classifying bats of Thailand ; after Thonglongya died suddenly in February 1974 , Hill formally described the species , giving it the binomial name *Craseonycteris thonglongyai* in honour of his colleague .

= = Conservation = =

As of the species ' most recent review in 2008 , Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat is listed by the IUCN as vulnerable , with a downward population trend .

Soon after the bat 's discovery in the 1970s , some roosting sites became disturbed as a result of tourism , scientific collection , and even the collection and sale of individuals as souvenirs . However , these pressures may not have had a significant effect on the species as a whole , since many small colonies exist in hard @-@ to @-@ access locations , and only a few major caves were disturbed . Another potential risk is the activity of local monks , who have occupied roost caves during periods of meditation .

Currently , the most significant and long @-@ term threat to the Thai population could be the annual burning of forest areas , which is most prevalent during the bat 's breeding season . In addition , the proposed construction of a pipeline from Burma to Thailand may have a negative impact . Threats to the Burmese population are not well known .

In 2007 , Kitti 's hog @-@ nosed bat was identified by the Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered project as one of its Top 10 " focal species " .