

Bats

OF THE Burnett Mary

Bats in Australia

Bats have inhabited Australia for many thousand years. **MEGA-BATS** play a vital part in assisting the seeding of forests and the regeneration of rainforests, while their smaller cousins the **MICRO-BATS** are responsible for keeping down pest insect populations. Bats in general are protected native Australian species and some are endangered species at both a State and Federal level.

Despite popular concern, bats pose minimal risk to humans, providing you leave them alone.

Flying Mammals

Although they may fly like a bird, bats are actually warm blooded mammals. Their wings consist of a thin membrane of skin that stretches across a bone structure, very similar to those of a human, only elongated and much smaller. This membrane is so thin they appear transparent when flying.

Hanging Upside Down

Bats hang by their feet with their head down because it is energy efficient. No energy is required to hang compared with defying gravity and standing upright. In order to reduce as much weight as possible for flight, the bones and muscles of the legs are very light weight compared with those of a non-flying mammal of comparable size. The biggest bones and muscles are those used for flying.

Echolocation

Unlike their larger cousins, micro-bats do not rely on sight to find food. Instead they use a form of radar called echolocation. Micro-bats echolocate by bouncing sound waves off objects and listening to the echo. In this way they are able to sense their environment and find their prey.

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MEGA-BATS



Eastern Blossom Bat
Syconycteris australis
This mouse-sized fruit bat can only be found in the sub-canopy of rainforest trees. It has a long thin muzzle and a very long tongue for feeding on nectar. It is one of the smallest of all the mega-bats in Australia.



Eastern Tube-nosed Bat
Nyctimene robinsoni
Generally a solitary species, the Eastern tube-nosed bat has long, protruding, tube-like nostrils and bright yellow spots across its wings and ears. They have a long tail and make a distinctive whistling call while in flight.



Black Flying-fox
Pteropus alecto
The black flying-fox is a common mega-bat across northern Australia. They are generally black all over, often with a reddish brown mantle around the back of the neck.



Grey-headed Flying-fox
Pteropus poliocephalus
The grey-headed flying-fox has a unique colouring of grey fur on its head with an orange collar around its neck. The rest of the body is a dark grey to brown. Conservation Status: Vulnerable (Cwth)



Little Red Flying-fox
Pteropus scapulatus
The little red flying-fox is a small, reddish-brown, nomadic species that can be found across most of Australia's semi-arid and tropical regions. They roost together in large colonies.

MICRO-BATS



Ghost Bat
Macroderna gigas
The ghost bat Australia's largest microbat. It feeds on large insects, birds and small mammals (including bats). Conservation Status: Endangered (Queensland), Vulnerable (Cwth)



Eastern Horseshoe Bat
Rhinolophus megaphyllus
The eastern horseshoe bat has generally greyish brown fur with pale tips and this stays the same throughout their lives. Conservation Status: Vulnerable (Queensland)



Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat
Saccolaimus flaviventris
The yellow-bellied sheathtail bat is very distinctive with jet black fur on its back and contrasting white, cream or yellow fur on its belly. Males have a large prominent gular (throat) pouch.



Troughton's Sheathtail Bat
Taphozous troughtoni
The Troughton's sheathtail bat is a cave dwelling species but can be found in rock crevices, boulder piles and abandoned mines. A relatively large species, 80 to 94mm long with a pointed muzzle and rounded ears.



Inland Freetail Bat
Mormopterus petersi
Inland freetail bats have a flat head and body shape. This enables them to fit into tight cracks and fissures in trees, under bark, wooden posts, roof beams, under corrugated iron and in lengths of water pipes.



Eastern Coastal Freetail Bat
Mormopterus norfolkensis
This species is confined in distribution to the east coast of Australia. It is dark to reddish brown on its back and slightly lighter on its belly. They roost in the hollows of large old trees but can occupy buildings and bat boxes.



Northern Freetail Bat
Mormopterus lumsdenae
This thick, robust and muscular bat is the largest species of Mormopterus (based on weight) in Australia. It has short greyish to light brown fur on the back and noticeably paler fur on the belly.



Eastern Freetail Bat
Mormopterus ridei
The Eastern freetail bat has a rich brown shaggy fur on its back with slightly paler belly fur. Colonies of several hundred species have been recorded and they prefer to roost in tree hollows.



White-striped Freetail Bat
Austronomus australis
This species is the largest and most widely distributed of Australia's freetail bats. It has a large throat pouch and is one of the few micro-bats that can produce echolocation calls audible to humans.



Little Bent-wing Bat
Miniopterus australis
The little bent-wing bat is the smallest of all the bent-wing bats. It has chocolate brown fur all over, a short muzzle and domed head. These are cave dwelling bats but will use mines, tunnels, drains and buildings.



Eastern Bent-wing Bat
Miniopterus orianae oceanensis
Eastern bent-wing bats have dark reddish brown fur and a short domed head with rounded ears. Females gather in maternity colonies in October (up to 100,000 individuals) and give birth to a single young in December.



Golden-tipped Bat
Phoniscus papuensis
This bat has woolly, dark brown fur with characteristic golden tips. Their broad wings and large tail membrane allow them to hover and manoeuvre precisely. This is an essential trait for being a spider catching specialist.



Eastern Long-eared Bat
Nyctophilus bilax
This species key feature is the low, rounded and hairless ridge on the muzzle behind the noseleaf. The eastern long-eared bat hunts by perching 5-10 m above the ground and wait for their prey to come in range.



Corben's Long-eared Bat
Nyctophilus corbeni
Conservation Status: Vulnerable (Cwth & Queensland)
A largely a solitary grey-brown bat with ears about 3 cm long. It has been recorded in the Bunya Mountains.



Lesser Long-eared Bat
Nyctophilus geoffroyi
This is the most common species of *Nyctophilus* in Australia. They have light grey, bicoloured fur (darker at the base) on their back and almost white fur on the belly. They have very long ears up to 25 mm long.



Gould's Long-eared Bat
Nyctophilus gouldi
The Gould's long-eared bat has slate grey to brown fur on the back and ash grey on the belly, with ears 24 to 30 mm long. It is known for its habit of changing roost sites regularly. It will readily occupy bat boxes.



Gould's Wattled Bat
Chalinolobus gouldii
Gould's wattled bats have brown fur on the back that darkens on the head and shoulders. They roost in the hollows of mature trees like river redgums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and cypress pines (*Callitris* sp.).



Chocolate Wattled Bat
Chalinolobus morio
Chocolate wattled bats are named for their uniformly milk-chocolate brown fur. They have a short muzzle with a steeply domed head. Roost sizes can vary from 6 to 70 females per tree hollow. Males tend to roost alone.



Hoary Wattled Bat
Chalinolobus nigrogriseus
This bat has dark grey to black fur with white-tips to the hairs, which gives the distinctive frosted appearance. They emerge from their roosts early in the evening, often in large numbers.



Little Pied Bat
Chalinolobus picatus
This bat has glossy black fur on its back with a grey belly. There are two white stripes that run on the sides of the body and form a 'V' at the pubic region. Little pied bats generally roost alone.



Eastern Falsistrelle
Falsistrellus tasmaniensis
One of the largest forest-dwelling bats in south-eastern Australia, this bat has dark brown to reddish brown fur on its back with a slightly paler belly. The ears are large and there is a characteristic small notch near the tip.



Large-footed Myotis
Myotis macropus
This species is one of Australia's most fascinating bats as it is the only species of bat in Australia to capture fish for food. They have large feet which they use to trawl for food near the water's surface.



Greater Broad-nosed Bat
Scoteanax rueppellii
This large micro-bat has reddish brown to dark brown fur. They have a tendency to eat other bats when in captivity or caught in bat traps; research indicates that this may be a common behaviour in the wild as well.



Inland Broad-nosed Bat
Scotorepens balstoni
This common species of microbat is about 50mm from head to tail. They have an aggressive nature and can be quite bitely when captured. Often seen as an early evening forager, flying below the tree canopy.



Little Broad-nosed Bat
Scotorepens greyii
The little broad-nosed bat has bicoloured brown to grey-brown fur; lighter at the base than the tips. Although small in size, this bat is known for its aggressive character and ability to deliver a forceful bite.



Eastern Broad-nosed Bat
Scotorepens orion
This species is dark brown in colour with a pug-like nose. They have been identified roosting up to 7 m off the ground in the hollows of manna gums. Little is known of their feeding habits.



Inland Forest Bat
Vespardelus baverstocki
This small bat has light sandy brown to brownish grey fur on its back with a paler belly. Identification of this species can be difficult with similarities with other *Vespardelus* species in the same geographical range.



Finlayson's Cave Bat
Vespardelus finlaysoni
The Finlayson's cave bat (also called the Inland cave bat) has black fur with the tips a paler shade of rusty-brown or yellow-brown that continues on the head, down to the muzzle.



Eastern Forest Bat
Vespardelus pumilus
Eastern forest bats feed between the canopy and the understorey on moths, beetles, flies, ants/wasps and bugs. Short periods of torpor in the early morning and late afternoon allow it to conserve energy.



Eastern Cave Bat
Vespardelus troughtoni
This bat has bicoloured fur that is light brown with ginger tips on its back and head. They forage in small areas over consecutive nights and are capable of flying 500 m over cleared land to feed on mosquitoes.



Little Forest Bat
Vespardelus vulturinus
One of the smallest mammals in Australia, this diminutive bat has great aerial agility when foraging for food. Their preferred roosting sites are hollows with small entrances but they will shelter in buildings.