

Mexican Free-tailed Bat

Mexican Free-tailed Bat *Tadarida brasiliensis*

Did you know? Mexican Free-tailed Bats, also known as Brazilian Free-tailed Bats, are the most common bat species under bridges in Southern Arizona.

Ecological Benefits:



These bats are significant predators of agricultural pests

Description: Medium-sized bats with long, narrow wings, dark brown or gray fur, and wrinkled upper lip. Unlike most bats, long tail extends beyond tail membrane - is 'free'.

Weight: 0.4-0.5 ounces

Wingspan: 11-13 inches

Body Length: 3.5 inches

Lifespan: 18 years

Feeding Strategies: Strong fliers, capable of flying 150 miles from day roost, reaching speeds of 60 mph, and altitudes of 10,000 feet. Not as maneuverable as other bats; must forage in open areas. Fly open-mouthed into swarms of migrating insects.



Reproduction: Pregnant females migrate to Arizona from Mexico and Central America in late-February and March. Give birth to one young in June. Pups begin to fly around 6 weeks of age.

Roosting: Utilize expansion joints under bridges as day roost and maternal colony. Form the largest colonies of any mammal, up to tens of millions. While foraging, use any sheltered area as night roost for brief respite.

Seasonal Activity: Begin southward migration in late September and October.

BATS ARE MAMMALS

- Their bodies are covered with fur.
 - They give birth to live young that they nurse.
 - They are endothermic (warm-blooded).
- Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight.*

BATS ARE DIVERSE

- Nearly 1/4 of all mammal species are bats!
- There are more than 1200 species of bats worldwide, 28 of which occur in Arizona.
- Bats inhabit all continents except Antarctica.
- 70% of bats eat insects and other arthropods.
- The remaining 30% consume nectar, fruit, and small vertebrates; only 3 species feed on blood.

BATS ARE BENEFICIAL

BATS POLLINATE BATS PROPOGATE BATS PROTECT



- Bats pollinate more than 700 species of plants.
- Some seeds will not germinate without first passing through a bat's digestive system.
- Bats play a critical role in keeping populations of night-flying insects in balance.
- Bats save farmers over \$20 billion annually by reducing crop damage.
- Bats are responsible for ~95% of reforestation in tropical rainforest through seed dispersal.

BATS ARE THREATENED

More than 100 bat species are listed as endangered, threatened, or vulnerable. Causes include:

- Loss of habitat
- Pesticide use
- Disturbance by humans
- Disease

An easy way to help bats is to reduce pesticide use!

Join us for seasonal bat-watching events
Check our calendar at www.pima.gov/nrpr



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Bridge-Roosting Bats



From April to September, thousands of bats seek shelter beneath Pima County bridges. The expansion joints on the bridge underside provide dark, protective crevices for roosting, birthing, and raising young.

Though the vast majority of our bridge-roosting bats are Mexican Free-tailed, populations often include Pallid, Canyon, and other bat species.



Pallid Bat



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Pallid Bat *Antrozous pallidus*

Did you know? Pallid Bats often glean prey from the ground.

Ecological Benefits:



These bats prey on scorpions, centipedes, and large insects. They are also an important pollinator and seed disperser for columnar cacti.

Description: Distinctive pale, cream-colored fur with very large ears and eyes. Scent glands on muzzles produce a musky odor used for defense.

Weight: 0.7-1.2 ounces 

Wingspan: 17-19 inches 

Body Length: 4.5 inches

Lifespan: 9-11 years

Feeding Strategies: Prey on large insects, scorpions, centipedes, and occasionally even lizards and small rodents. Use echolocation to hunt prey in flight and passive listening to detect sounds made by prey on the ground. Also consume nectar and fruit of the cardón cactus in warmer climates.



Reproduction: Usually give birth to twins in May or June.

Roosting: Day roosts include rock crevices, buildings, caves, mines, and bridges. Leave roosts later than most other bat species. Form colonies of 20 or more. Larger prey often carried from ground to night roost for consumption.

Seasonal Activity: May be active year-round or may hibernate; they do not appear to migrate.

Canyon Bat



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Canyon Bat *Parastrellus hesperus*

Did you know? Canyon Bats, formerly known as Western Pipistrelles, are the smallest bats in North America. They are often mistaken for large moths.

Ecological Benefits:



These bats are able to consume up to half their body weight in mosquito-sized insects per night.

Description: Pale reddish to golden brown fur with dark masks and ears. Fluttering flight is slow and appears erratic. Emerge from day roosts well before sunset.

Weight: 0.1-0.2 ounces 

Wingspan: 7-9 inches

Body Length: 3 inches

Lifespan: 10-13 years

Feeding Strategies: Capture mosquitoes and other flies, small beetles, and moths in flight. Extremely agile bats, capable of performing acrobatic maneuvers when chasing prey.



Reproduction: Despite their small size, females usually give birth to twins in June or July.

Roosting: Day roosts include rock crevices, buildings, caves, mines, and bridges. Leave roosts earlier than most other bat species. Colonies are usually small (about 12 individuals). Day roosts and night roosts are often the same.

Seasonal Activity: Little is known about winter habits; believed to hibernate.