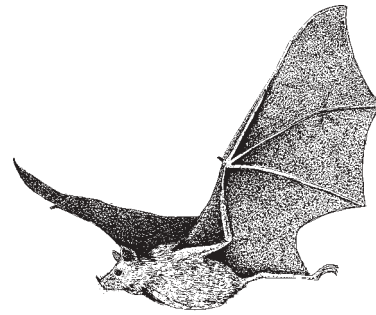
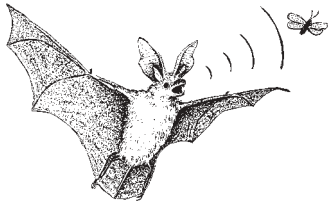




Who's at Bat for the Saguaro?



Bat-Ground



Twenty-eight species of bats call Arizona home. To many people, this is not good news - conjuring up images of vampires and haunted houses. But in reality, bats are very beneficial to the environment.

Most of the impressions and feelings that people have about bats are derived from myth, horror movies and sensationalized media stories. These sources usually portray bats as evil, or associate them with death and disease.

It is unfortunate that bats must suffer a bad reputation due to a lack of knowledge and understanding. The truth is, bats are gentle, intelligent animals. They do not seek out people and simply want to be left alone. This is especially true while hibernating or raising babies. If a colony is disturbed during one of these sensitive periods, mortality rates may be extremely high, jeopardizing the entire colony and in the end, the species.

Many people are familiar with the insect-eating species of bats, such as the Mexican free-tailed bats found at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Since these bats are active at night, they have developed a sophisticated navigation system called "echolocation", which is much like our modern day sonar. As a bat flies, it emits a series of high frequency sounds. When these sounds hit an object, they "bounce off" and return to the bat. The bat is then able to "see" what is around it by interpreting the returning sounds. It is such a sensitive system that the bat is able to determine the size, speed and direction of travel of a moving insect, and, in the same fraction of a second, plot a course of interception.

Bats and Saguaro Cacti

Here at Saguaro National Park, two species of nectar feeding bats, the Mexican long-tongued and the lesser long-nosed bats, play a vital role in the pollination of saguaro and other cacti. Nectar-feeding bats differ from most other species of bats by having an elongated muzzle, small nose and long tongue. These features allow them to reach deep inside the saguaro flowers. The flowers are pollinated as the bats travel from blossom to blossom. To assist in this symbiotic relationship, the large creamy white flowers open at night, aiding the bats in finding them in the dark.

Although many other types of animals may pollinate saguaros, research has shown that bats are particularly efficient in helping saguaros produce fertile fruit. The next time you see a healthy saguaro, thank a bat!



Bats of Arizona

* Species confirmed in
Saguaro National Park

Free-tailed Bats

Mexican Free-tailed Bat *

Pocketed Free-tailed Bat

Big Free-tailed Bat

Western Mastiff Bat

Underwood's Mastiff Bat

Ghost-faced Bats

Peter's Ghost-faced Bat

Leaf-nosed Bats

California Leaf-nosed Bat *

Mexican Long-tongued Bat *

Lesser Long-nosed Bat *

Plain-nosed Bats

Yuma Myotis *

Cave Myotis *

Little Brown Bat

Long-eared Myotis

Southwestern Myotis *

Fringed Myotis *

Long-legged Myotis *

California Myotis *

Western Small-footed Myotis *

Silver-haired Bat *

Western Pipistrelle *

Big Brown Bat *

Desert Red Bat

Western Yellow Bat

Hoary Bat *

Spotted Bat

Lappet-browed Bat

Townsend's Big-eared Bat *

Pallid Bat *

Molossidae

Tadarida brasiliensis

Nyctinomops femorosacca

Nyctinomops macrotis

Eumops perotis

Eumops underwoodi

Mormoopidae

Mormoops megalophylla

Phyllostomidae

Macrotus californicus

Choeronycteris mexicana

Leptonycteris curasoae

Vespertilionidae

Myotis yumanensis

Myotis velifer

Myotis lucifugus

Myotis evotis

Myotis auriculus

Myotis thysanodes

Myotis volans

Myotis californicus

Myotis ciliolabrum

Lasionycteris noctivagans

Pipistrellus hesperus

Eptesicus fuscus

Lasiurus blossevillii

Lasiurus xanthinus

Lasiurus cinereus

Euderma maculatum

Idionycteris phyllotis

Corynorhinus townsendii

Antrozous pallidus

For more Information



Bat Conservation International
P.O. Box 162603
Austin, Texas 78716-2603
1-800-538-BATS
www.batcon.org

Arizona Sonora Desert Museum
2021 North Kinney Road
Tucson, Arizona 85743
1-520-883-2702
www.desertmuseum.org

