

## Amazing bat facts:

- The Greater bulldog bat, which is named for its dog-like face, uses sonar to catch fish. Flying above the water, it senses tell-tale ripples caused by the underwater movements of its prey. It skims the surface with its large feet and swiftly snatches a fish.
- Kitti's hog-nosed bat is the world's smallest bat and is in the running for the world's smallest mammal at just 33mm in length.
- Move over nightingales; the males of several bat species woo their mates with tunes that are every bit as complex as those of songbirds.
- The Desert long-eared bat chows down on scorpions—and doesn't mind being stung in the face as it pounces on its prey. Native to parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia, this bat catches scorpions by attacking their heads. The scorpions vigorously defend themselves by stinging the bat on its face and body. Unperturbed, the bat dispatches its meals and carries them back to a roost. There, it gulps down every bit of a scorpion—even the stinger.
- The Tube-lipped nectar bat's tongue is 1.5 times the length of its body. This bat uses its monstrous tongue to reach tasty nectar that's deep inside long-tubed flowers. When the tongue's not in use, it's stored in the bat's chest, next to its heart.
- Certain fruit-eating bats have a wingspan of over 5 feet. One of the largest is the Golden-crowned fruit bat of the Philippines. Named for its shock of blond "hair," it can weigh more than 1kg.
- Many insect-eating bats use echolocation to hunt down their flying prey. But some moths fight back. They rub their genitals together to make sounds that interfere with a bat's sonar. Confused, the hungry bats zero in on the wrong location and bite at empty air.

## Sources:

**Mentalfloss.com, Britannica.com,  
Wikipedia**



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## Little free-tailed bat

**No.4 in a series:  
Mammals of the Country Club Estate**



**Free-tailed bats are from the Molossidae family of bats, so named for their resemblance to Molossus dogs, forebears of today's mastiffs. They are widespread, being found on every continent except Antarctica.**

**Molossidae is the fourth-largest family of bats, containing about 110 species. Nine species of Free-tailed bats occur in South Africa and the Little free-tailed bats are often seen in the skies above CCJ in the late evenings.**



## Description

They have slightly wrinkled lips and large upright ears. Their relatively long, narrow wings is a strong flying form which allows them to reach speeds of up to 80kph (using tail winds) and attain altitudes of over 3000m: The ratio between total wing surface area and body mass give a high wing loading index for this group of bats. As a consequence, they are not agile flyers compared to other bats and they need to fly fast to remain airborne, and follow straighter flight paths. This makes them unique among bats. They are around 9cm in length (excluding the tail) and weigh about 12g.

## Diet

They are insectivorous and catch their food on the wing. Like most bats, they have monochromatic vision. Vision is used in a secondary capacity to echolocation for catching insects.

## Breeding

Female Little free-tailed bats can have three births per year in early November, late January and early April (in Southern Africa), where a single young is born per birth. Its fast reproduction makes this species an effective biological control method for insects.

Females are sexually mature at an age of 5-12 months.



*Little free tailed bat*



*Desert long eared bat*

## Roosting

Brickwork under roofs, corrugated roofs, or other crevices in buildings, provide suitable roosting sites for Little free-tailed bats within built-up areas. Natural roost sites include cracks and crevices in rocks (especially granite outcrops) and trees. They may form large colonies of hundreds in some regions of South Africa.

## Predation

Known predators include Bat hawks, Wahlberg's eagles and African goshawks. These raptors successfully catch 1-5 bats per night. Little free-tailed bats may have developed their erratic flight pattern as an anti-predator tactic. Their nocturnal activity and cryptic colouration also help to protect them from some predators.



*The Greater Bulldog bat catches fish*