

Bat

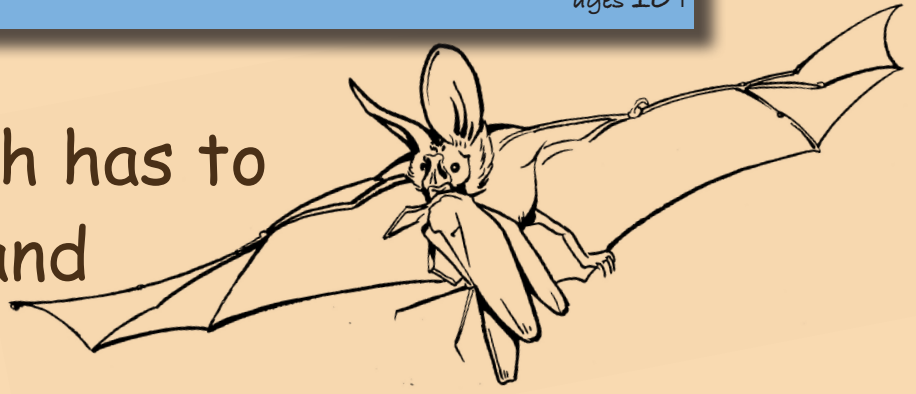
Truths & Untruths

Bat Truths

Bats are some of the most useful animals in our world, yet unknowing people hate and fear them.

This booklet will explain both the good and the bad about bats. It is full of "bat truths"!

The first truth has to do with bats and fruit. Of the two major kinds of bats, one group is called "fruit bats"-- Megachiroptera (Meh gah kai rop ter ah). Mega means BIG.



Bats Do eat the farmer's fruit.. BUT they prefer ripe/rotten fruit which farmers can't sell ... So .. why is that so bad? Its not! When they eat fruit & scatter seeds more fruit trees appear.

Fruit bats have a big job of spreading pollen in the flowers of food plants. Whatever fruits bats eat, it is trivial compared to the food they make

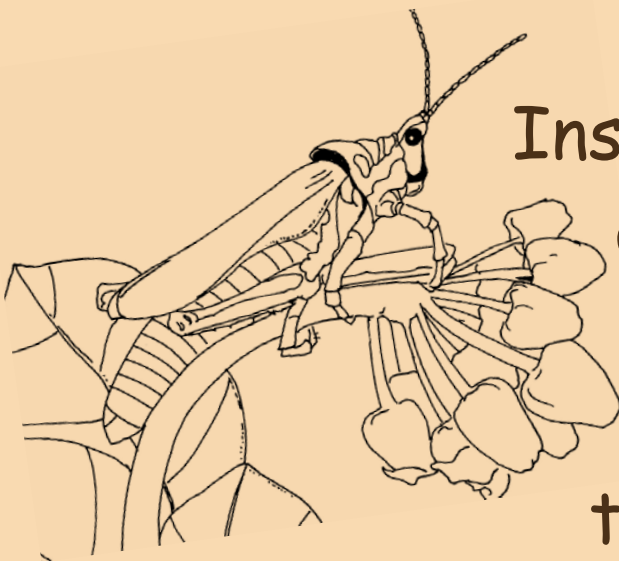
available by pollinating food plants and disbursing seeds! They are vital for our survival and that of some animals & many plants.

The other major group of bats are insect bats and their scientific name is microchiroptera (mi crow kai rop ter ah). Micro means SMALL. Insect bats eat mosquitos, bugs, beetles, flies, and other insects.

These insect bats help control insect pests. Some of them also feed on small animals like mice and rats, which are sometimes pests as well.

Insect bats have an interesting way of catching their food. They use their large ears and a unique skill to

find their bugs and beetles. The skill is called "echolocation" (ek-co-low-cay-shun). It works by allowing the bat to know the location of a bug by measuring the time it takes for an echo to return from the bug. Sounds impossible but blind people also use their ears to see, just not quite in the same way.



Insectivorous bats are really useful in controlling insect pests. Some of the insect-eating bats eat large insects which

are half the body weight of the bat! Without insect-eating bats we would have less fruit which also would be more expensive. We would have more disease bearing and unsanitary insects. Bats of both kinds, fruit and insect, do good for us. We should respect them and leave them alone.

Bat UN-Truths

- Bats Do NOT get caught in people's hair.
- Bats DO NOT ordinarily carry rabies ... there are more instances of dogs and cats with rabies than bats.
- Bats are not blind. The term "blind as a bat" isn't really accurate. Bats have perfectly good eyes for seeing in the daylight.

- Bats DO NOT suck blood. Only 3 species of vampire bats that live in Central and South America feed on blood. Vampire bats almost never feed on human blood. They much prefer the blood of cattle, horses, pigs and birds. Scientists are currently studying the saliva of these bats to develop drugs to prevent blood clots in the heart patients.
- Bats DO NOT attack people. They are afraid of humans, viewing us as predators, and will avoid us when possible.
- Bats are not dirty.
- Bat are not evil. Some people even believe that Count Dracula turns into a bat! Bats are good, not evil.