**Bat Myths VS The Truth About Bats**

**MYTH:** “Bats are blind.”

**TRUTH**: All bats can see. In fact, some bats have eyesight that is three times better vision than humans!

**MYTH:** “All bats have rabies.”

**TRUTH:** Less than 1% of bats have rabies. However, it is always best to avoid handling any wild mammal,

including bats.

**MYTH:** “Bats are dirty.”

**TRUTH:** Bats are extremely clean and groom themselves constantly, like cats.

**MYTH:** “Bats are rodents or flying mice.”

**TRUTH:** Bats are not rodents. In fact, they are “more” closely related to whales, cats, dogs and shrews. Unlike mice, most bats have only one baby at a time and live long lives.

**MYTH:** “Bats attack people.”

**TRUTH:** Bats do not attack. They are afraid of humans and avoid people when they can. However, bats can be curious or fly around people to eat the insects buzzing around them.

**MYTH: “**Bats suck blood from people.”

**TRUTH:** Bats do not suck blood from humans. However, vampire bats do exist in some regions of Central and South America and they drink blood from non-human animals (A vampire bat may drink about two “tea-spoons” of blood per night from their non-human host).

**15 FUN FACTS ABOUT BATS**

1) Bats are the only mammals that fly. Scientists classify them into an order called “*Chiroptera*” which means “*hand-wing*.”

2) There are more than 1,400 species of bats in the world. ¼ of all mammals are bats.

3) One insect-eating bat can consume 2,000-6,000 insects in a single night!

4) Bats are important in controlling many disease-carrying and crop-harming insects. Bats save US farmers over $1 billion USD annually by eating pests that cause crop damage.

5) The Mexican free-tailed bat is the fastest animal in horizontal speed, reaching 99 mph (160 km/h), and also, at the highest altitude recorded for any bat—10,800 ft (3,300 m).

6) Fruit-eating bats spread seeds as they fly and digest food, which reseeds deforested land.

7) Fuit-eating bats can carry fruits of up to 20 to 40% of their body weight.

8) The smallest bat in the world is the Kitties Hog-nosed Bat, also known as the Bumblebee Bat. It weighs as little as a dime (2 grams) and has a six-inch (16 cm) wingspan.

9) Small bats (less than 200 grams) are found all over the world. They have large ears, small eyes, and small bodies, and commonly use echolocation to find food. They eat a wide range of food, including insects, nectar, fruit, frogs, mice, fish, and blood.

10) Nectar-feeding bats pollinate many economically valuable plants including wild bananas, balsa wood, agave, calabash tree, and durians.

11) Nectar bats possess tongues longer than their body length and can move it faster than any mammal.

12) In addition to sight, many species of bats have ultrasonic sonar capabilities (echolocation), which they use to navigate and catch insects in total darkness.

13) There are three species of vampire bats that drink blood from non-human animals such as cows, pigs, goats, rodents, and chickens. These small bats live from Mexico to South America.

14) The largest bat in the world is the Giant Golden-Crowned fruit bat. It weighs two and a half pounds (up to 1200 kg) and has a six-foot wingspan (up to 1.7 m)!

15) Large bats are commonly called megabats or flying foxes because their faces look like the face of a dog. These are members of a bat family that live in Africa, Asia, or Australia and consume mostly fruit and nectar.

*Learn more about Bats on batweek.org*