



## All About Bats



Dusty thought his friends would be very interested in bats so he sent them another report. Click on the arrow to begin reading.

There are more than 950 different types of bat. Bats live all over the world except in Antarctica. Britain has 16 different kinds of bat. Bats are very interesting creatures.



- ▶ What is a bat?
- ▶ How big is a bat?
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- ▶ What do bats eat?
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### What is a bat?

A bat is a flying mammal. Mammals are creatures that give birth to live babies and feed their young on milk.



Most mammals have hair or fur. Human beings are mammals. Bats have wings and are the only mammals that can fly. Inside their bodies they have bones and they have small, pointed teeth.



### How big is a bat?

Bats come in different sizes. Most of them are small – not much bigger than a mouse with wings.



noctule bat

In Britain, the largest bat is the **noctule** bat which measures just over eight centimetres long. The smallest bat in Britain is the **pipistrelle** bat which measures about four centimetres.



pipistrelle bat

### How do bats move?

Bats fly, just like birds and insects fly. They flap their wings and take off. Bats' wings are made from thin skin stretched between their body, legs and long finger bones.



Some bats can scurry along the ground if they have to but most bats can't walk. They avoid landing on the ground and, if they do end up there, they find it very difficult to take off and fly.



However, one type of bat lands on the ground all time.

This is the vampire bat. Vampire bats can use their wings like another pair of legs to help them scurry along.



### What do bats eat?

There are two main types of bats. Most smaller bats feed on insects such as moths but others hunt animals almost as large as themselves.



Vampire bats live on blood from other animals such as cattle and there are some bats that feed on fish.



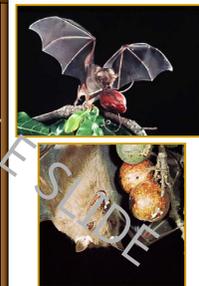
vampire bat



A vampire bat feeding on a pig's blood.

A vampire bat feeding on a cow.

Larger bats feed on fruit or nectar from flowers. Bats that eat fruit are known as fruit bats and they live in hot countries where their food grows all year round. They feed at night and spend the day hanging from trees.



### How do bats hunt?

Bats hunt their prey in the dark at night. Although they have eyes that work, most bats rely on squeaks and their sensitive hearing to find their prey.



They make high pitched squeaks and clicks and then wait to hear if any echoes return to them. Then they can tell if food is near. Insect-eating bats use echoes to catch moths in mid-flight and bats that hunt larger animals, such as mice, use echoes too.



Bat uses returning sound waves