

## “Batty About Bats”

### Background Information

Bats can be found almost anywhere, just like people. Extremely cold or hot places are the only exceptions. The bat colonies roost in caves, barns, and other dark places. Most bats like to live in colonies, but some like to live on their own.

Bats give birth to live babies. This is the same as humans. When a bat is born, it cannot see, and it does not have much fur. Baby bats are called pups. They live on the milk their mother gives them. The pups hang upside down with their mother while they sleep. The pups have to be careful. If a pup falls to the ground before it can fly, it will die. Every night, the mother bat leaves the nest to go hunting for food. The food can be anything from fruit to bugs to blood! When the mother bat returns home, she finds her pups by calling for them in a unique way.

The pups grow quickly. After three weeks, the pups begin learning to fly. Soon, they are able to fly out with their mother to find food. This happens after about six weeks. The bats are no longer pups! They have officially become adult bats after six weeks and will likely live a long life—up to 30 years.

There are about 1,000 different kinds of bats. The bumblebee bat is about an inch long and weighs less than a penny. The flying fox is the biggest bat in the world. Its wingspan can be as large as six feet! That’s about the size of a tall man. The vampire bat is the only mammal that eats only blood. Scientists think bats have been around for more than 50 million years. The fossils of ancient bats look almost identical to the bats of today. They have not changed a lot over the years.