



Endangered Bats of America

Bats have lived in America since the age of dinosaurs. Today they rank among our most endangered wildlife. The loss of bats threatens the balance of nature and our economy. The majority of bats in the United States eat insects; a few bat species in the Southwest and in Florida drink nectar and pollinate plants. In fact, bats are very important controllers of night-flying insects. One little brown bat can catch up to 1,200 mosquitoes in just one hour! Bats help control many insects that attack farm and garden crops. Having bats around helps reduce our dependence on insect-killing chemicals, benefitting human health and nature.

Of the 45 kinds of bats living in the United States, seven are in danger of becoming extinct:

The **greater (Mexican) long-nosed bat** (*Leptonycteris nivalis*) is an insect- and nectar-feeding bat found in the Big Bend region of southwestern Texas. Nectar-feeding bats are primary pollinators and spread the seeds of many desert plants.

The **lesser long-nosed bat** (*Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuena*) is an insect- and nectar-feeding bat found in the caves and mines of the Southwest. This bat helps pollinate the saguaro and organ-pipe cacti and the agave, the plant from which tequila is made.

The **Hawaiian hoary bat** (*Lasiurus cinereus semotus*) is Hawaii's only native bat. It helps control night-flying insects.

The **gray bat** (*Myotis grisescens*) forages over rivers and reservoirs in the Southeast and depends on a few caves in Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama to hibernate, roost, and bear young.

The **Indiana bat** (*Myotis sodalis*) roosts in hollow trees or underneath the loose bark of trees in eastern woodlands during the summer and depends on just nine caves for winter hibernation.

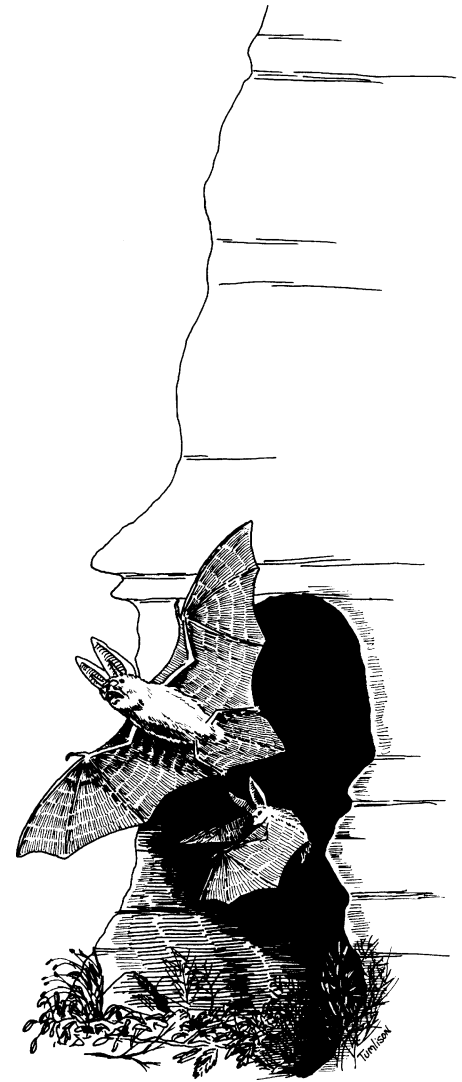
The **Virginia big-eared bat** (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*) is found only in a few caves in the mountain and plateau regions of Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina.

The **Ozark big-eared bat** (*Corynorhinus townsendii ingens*) is found only in a few caves in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

Despite their many values, more than half of America's bat species are endangered or in decline. But you can help keep these bats alive!

- Ø Learn all you can about bats.
- Ø Do not use pesticides or dump chemicals into waterways.
- Ø Stay out of caves that are gated or have signs posted
- Ø Never shoot, poison, or harm bats or the places they live.
- Ø If you find a bat, please leave it alone. Bats can bite in self-defense like most wild animals.

For more information about endangered bats, visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's web site at <http://endangered.fws.gov/bats/bats.htm>, the National Wildlife Federation's Keep The Wild Alive campaign web site at <http://www.nwf.org/wildalive>, or Bat Conservation International at 1-800/538-BATS or visit their web site at <http://www.batcon.org>.



Virginia big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*)

"The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."