



Caribbean Fruit Bat – *Artibeus jamaicensis* – Very common before Ivan but now rare - eats wild fruits but becomes a nuisance to farmers when it feeds on cultivated fruits like mangoes and naseberries. It is our largest bat and lives in dense vegetation or caves. It cannot fit into bat houses.



Antillean Fruit and Nectar Bat – *Brachyphylla nana nana* – Rare – Caribbean Endemic – eats both wild and cultivated fruits. It lives only in caves, never bat houses or trees. This is our second largest bat and its cave roosts are not known or documented yet.

The practice of filling caves during development may be annihilating this bat and other important Cayman Islands species like the Big-eared Bat and the Buffy Flower Bat, which also live only in caves. Note the lack of a tail. Bats are not “flying mice” and are not in the rodent family. They bear only one pup per year, never chew wood or wires like mice, and do not invade food supplies. Bats are not vampires, do not carry rabies here, and will not tangle in your hair!



White-shouldered Bat – *Phyllops falcatus* Extremely Rare – Caribbean endemic - eats *only* small wild fruits, like figs, is *not* a crop pest and will *not* live in caves or bat houses. It roosts in very small groups in large old fig trees and is found in the Lower Valley Forest on Grand Cayman and on Cuba and Haiti. This bat is completely dependant upon forests for its survival. Thought to be extirpated until the recent re-discovery, but has not been reassessed since Hurricane Ivan. Possibly extirpated.



Buffy Flower Bat – *Erophylla sezikorni* – Very Rare - Caribbean endemic - drinks nectar like a hummingbird. Does not eat fruit and is not a crop pest. It lives only in the remotest recesses of caves. It is extremely distressed when disturbed, and may even die of fright. These bats are major pollinators of cactus, agaves, silk floss and other flowering trees. The population has not been reassessed since Hurricane Ivan. Possibly extirpated.

Velvety Free-tailed Bat – *Molossus molossus* – Very common - eats only insects – never eats fruit - lives in roof spaces and bat houses. Rarely found in caves. This bat is very small, but large colonies are of great benefit in insect control. Each individual bat eats **1,000** moths, beetles and mosquitoes every night.



Brown Bats – two sub-species of *Eptesicus fuscus* – The lighter coloured Brac species is shared with Cuba. The Grand Cayman species is darker and found nowhere else in the world. This bat eats only insects and is extremely rare. The species is known to use bat houses, but there is no record in C.I.



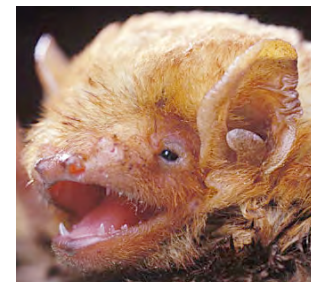
Big-eared Bat – *Macrotus waterhousii* – eats only large, slow-flying insects like palmetto bugs, roaches, grasshoppers and bigger moths and beetles. It lives only in caves, never in bat houses. This bat seems to be disappearing due to loss of cave habitat and excessive disturbance within known roosting caves. It is now very rare, though it was considered to be common as late as the 1980s.



Brazilian Free-tailed Bat – *Tadarida brasiliensis* – Very Rare – eats small high-flying insects like beetles, moths and mosquitoes. Known to use bat houses, but has not yet done so in Cayman. This is an extremely beneficial, insect-eating bat that seems to be disappearing here. Since the beginning of the Bat Conservation Project in 1993 we have only seen one dying individual and found one colony of only 17 bats in a small remote cave. This is an alarming population drop from the 30,000 estimated to have once lived in a single cave in Old Man Bay.



Red Bat – *Lasiurus spp unknown* – This insect-eating bat roosts alone in trees. It does not use bat houses or caves. This is a newly documented species for the Cayman Islands. It was probably always here, but just not seen due to its solitary and reclusive habits. This is the only bat known to have twins. Most bat species have only one young per year.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Seek information about how to reduce the "nuisance factor" without harming the animals. Bats can be easily removed from buildings using simple, effective and humane methods. Call LIME Wildlife Rescue Hotline - **917-BIRD** or the National Trust at **949-0121** for information

Baby bats are born during the summer months. They are flightless from June 1 until Nov 15. Bats cannot be removed during these months without an inspection. Call LIME Hotline 917-BIRD before excluding.

Buy or build a bat house for your garden. Call for a free inspection of your property to see if a bat house is right for you.

Plant papaya, almond and palmetto for fruit bats. Share your mangoes and naseberries with neighborhood bats. We are actively helping farmers to find ways to control damage using environmentally sound practices.

Don't disturb roosting bats in caves or trees.

Join Bat Conservation Int. www.batcon.org or the British Bat Conservation Trust www.bats.org.uk or the National Trust www.nationaltrust.org.ky

Volunteer to help the Bat Conservation Project. Participate in bat population counts. Give PowerPoint shows and talks to interested local groups. Help us to care for orphaned or injured bats.

If you find an injured bat do not touch it with your bare hands. Carefully secure it with a box and call LIME Hotline **917-BIRD** or Veterinarian, Dr. Brenda Bush at 949-0787, or the National Trust at **949-0121**.

For a free visit to approve a bat house location, or to arrange a free slide show for your school or group, call LIME Wildlife Hotline 917-BIRD or the National Trust at 949-0121 or email info@caymanwildlife.org

REMEMBER: BATS NEED FRIENDS!!!

Visit www.caymanwildlife.org or www.nationaltrust.org.ky

Written By Lois Blumenthal

CAYMAN BAT BASICS

Many people think that a "bat is just a bat", but this is like saying that "a bird is just a bird". Cayman Islands bats are not all the same! There are **NINE** species of bats here, and one very special sub-species that is endemic to Grand Cayman. It is not found on the Brac or Little Cayman nor anywhere else in the world. Bats are truly as diverse as birds. No one would confuse a parrot with a pelican! Some of Cayman's bats are very rare, and some are important to the control of mosquitoes. They also eat millions of crop pests like moths and beetles. Even fruit bats, though sometimes a nuisance to farmers, eat up to 25% insects found on fruits. They are preventing more damage than they cause. Fruit bats also "clean up" overripe fruits in the wild and on farms, so rotten fruits do not become breeding grounds for fungus or destructive insects. **When fruit bats are eliminated from an ecosystem, crop damage becomes worse!**



Big-eared Bat with Katydid

Bats are the only native mammals in the Cayman Islands. They are beneficial to the environment and rarely interact with people. Only one of our ten types is known to use bat houses here, or roost in roofs. Most of our bats live in caves or in dense foliage. Of the ten kinds of bats that live here, only two eat fruit!