



Bat Facts British Bats



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Bats are mysterious creatures. They are nocturnal which means they sleep through the day and can be seen darting through the night sky hunting for insects.



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British Bats

In Britain there are 16 different types of bats. Some of those are very rare. Scientists think that there is only one greater mouse-eared bat left in England, when it dies there will be no more greater mouse-eared bats in Britain.



Greater mouse-eared bat



The smallest bat that lives in Britain is the pipistrelle bat and the largest is the noctule.

noctule bats



All bats that live in the UK eat insects although each different type of bat has its own favourites. Most insects are caught in mid-air. The tiny pipistrelle can eat more than 3000 insects in one night.

pipistrelle bat



Where do bats live?

Unlike birds, bats don't make nests. Instead they choose different places to roost with other bats. Some bats prefer caves, some prefer hollow trees. Many shelter in buildings or make their home in people's lofts and roof spaces.

Bats are clean, sociable animals and spend a lot of time grooming themselves.



Bats roosting (resting and sleeping) in the roof space of a house.

Do bats hibernate?

British bats hibernate (sleep) in the winter to save energy and because insects are hard to find during the colder months. Their hearts slow down and their body temperature drops. This helps them to survive through the cold winter months.



When bats hibernate they wrap their wings around their bodies and huddle together.

If they didn't hibernate, most bats in the UK would starve to death because they wouldn't be able to find food.

As soon as the weather gets warmer the bats start to emerge from their winter sleep.



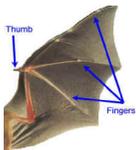
Upside down bats

British bats find it almost impossible to stand up and take off from the ground or any other flat surface.

To get into the air, they take off by dropping from a height. When they are resting they hang upside down because of the way their legs are positioned.



Bats have a hook-shaped claw on the thumb bone of their wings. They use this claw to help them move around while they are hanging upside down.



Pipistrelle Babies

Pipistrelle bats are the most common bats in Britain. During the summer, female bats form maternity colonies where they each give birth to one baby in June or early July.



A colony is a group of animals living together. A maternity colony is where female bats give birth to their babies.

Baby pipistrelle bats are fed on their mother's milk. The mother bats return several times from their night time hunting trips to feed their babies.

Within three weeks, the young bats make their first flights and at six weeks old they are able to look after themselves.



Baby pipistrelle bats are tiny.



Protecting Bats

Bats are amazing creatures but they need protection. In the whole of the UK there is only one greater mouse-eared bat left alive. So that other types of bats don't disappear and die out, all bats are protected by the law. That means it's against the law to kill, injure, disturb or take any bat.

We can protect bats from becoming extinct by making sure we don't do anything to harm them.

