

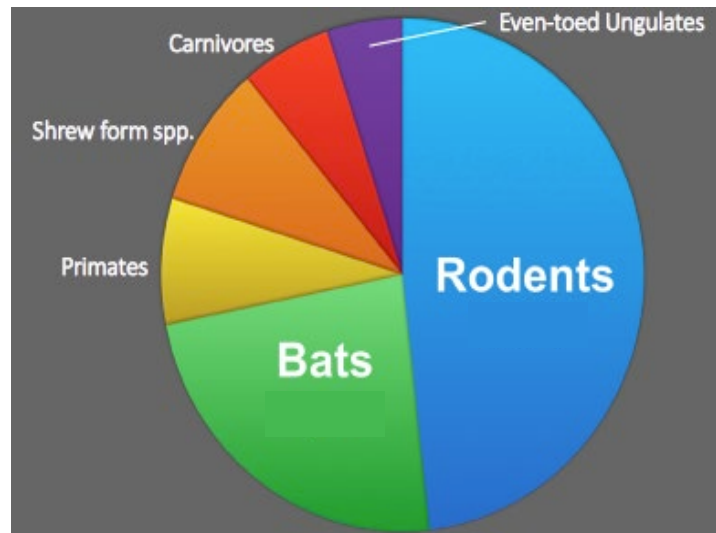
Bat Facts & Crafts

Overview:

Bats are among the most misunderstood creatures, often generating fear and loathing. Yet, they are actually fascinating animals, that provide countless beneficial services to humans and ecosystems. Here we will share some bat fun facts, debunk incorrect popular myths, and provide ideas for enjoyable bat crafts.

Bat Species and Flight:

- Bats are the only mammals capable of powered flight. Other mammals may be able to glide, but only bats actively flap their wings to control their flight and remain aloft.
- Their wings are composed of elongated forelimbs and fingers, that support a thin, skin-like membrane stretching between the digits and connected to the ankle.
- The remarkable ability of flight has allowed them to greatly diversify. Bats are present nearly everywhere in the world, with the sole exception of Antarctica. Of the 6,495 mammal species alive today, over 1,611 of them are bats (nearly 25% of all mammal species).

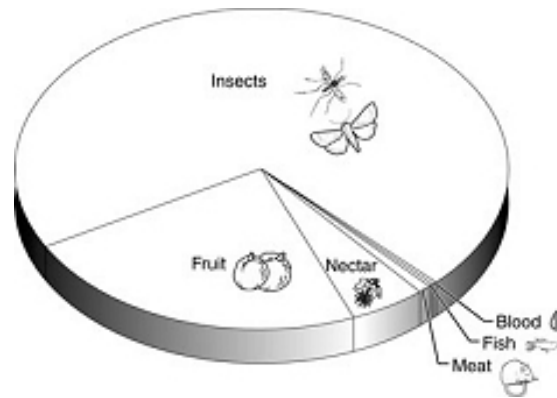


- Bat sizes can vary widely as well. The largest bats, flying foxes, have a wingspan up to 6-feet. While the smallest bats, bumblebee bats (the smallest mammal in the world), have a wingspan of less than 6-inches.



Bat Diet, Pollination, and Pest Control:

- Bats have a wide variety of diets:
 - ~2/3 of bat species eat insects
 - ~1/3 feed on fruit or nectar
 - <1% consume frogs, fish, or small mammals
 - 3 species drink blood



- Everyone knows that bees pollinate flowers and fruits, but many do not realize that bats do this as well. In fact, bats aid in seed dispersal and pollination of over 500 types of edible plants, including: bananas, cocoa, guava, mango, figs, agave, cashews, and peaches.
 - Do you like bananas with breakfast or chocolate for dessert? Thank a bat!
- Insectivorous bats can eat over $\frac{3}{4}$ of their body weight in insects each night. Some of these bats specialize in eating mosquitoes and other pests.
 - Do you enjoy going outside without scratching at bug bites? Thank a bat!

Myth vs Fact:

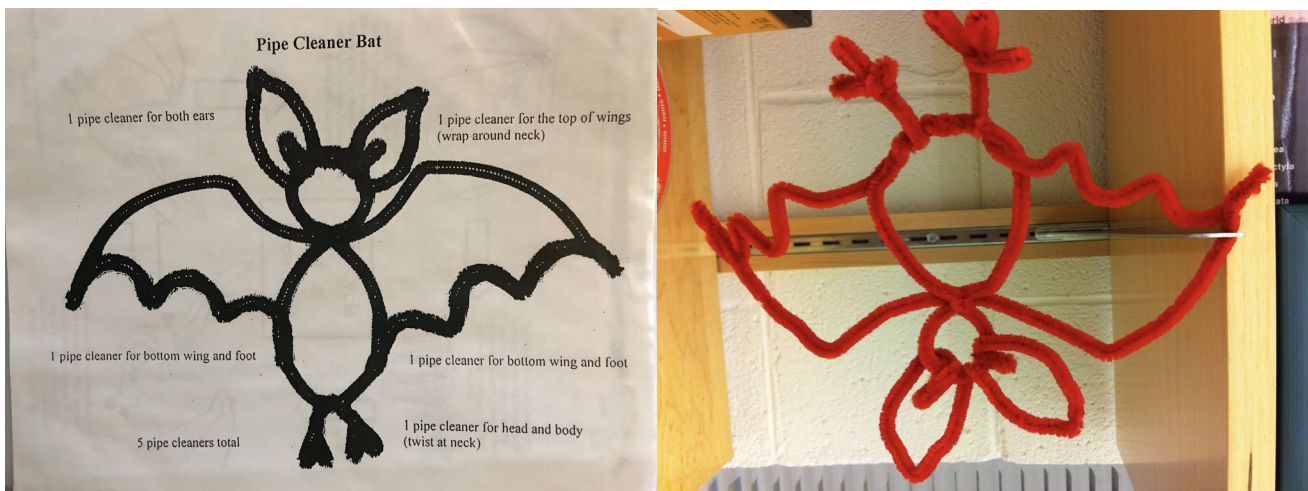
- **Myth:** Bats are just flying mice. **Fact:** Bats are not rodents. In fact, bats are more closely related to humans than they are to rodents. Bats are classified in their own order of mammals called Chiroptera, which translates as “hand-wing.”
- **Myth:** All bats have rabies. **Fact:** All mammals can contract rabies, including bats; however, the vast majority of bats do not have it. Bats that contract the virus die from the disease. Never pick up, handle or play with a bat.
- **Myth:** Bats get tangled in your hair. **Fact:** Bats don’t build nests and have little interest in our hair.
- **Myth:** Bats attack people. **Fact:** Bats are afraid of humans and try to stay away from people as best they can.
- **Myth:** Bats suck blood. **Fact:** Only 3 of the more than 1,600 kinds of bats in the world are vampire bats. And even those don’t “suck” blood, but lap it like a cat laps milk. Vampire bats only live in Mexico, Central America and South America.
- **Myth:** Bats are pests. **Fact:** Bats are the ones that eat the pests—insects! Some insect-eating bats can eat their body weight in insects in one night.
- **Myth:** Bats are dirty. **Fact:** Bats groom themselves just like cats and are very clean.
- **Myth:** Bats are blind. **Fact:** All bats can see. Many types of bats have small eyes and use echolocation to navigate, but they aren’t blind.

Bat Crafts:

- Make your own bat with items around the home. Any of these ideas can be easily modified based on what you have available. Everything looks funnier with googly eyes, but drawing the eyes works just as well.
- TP Bat
 - Use an empty toilet paper roll to make the bat body. Trace your hands and cut out to make the wings. Cut two additional pieces for the ears. Paint or color each piece as you like. Then attach all pieces with glue or tape.



- PC Bat
 - Use five pipe cleaners and twist into the shape of a bat. You can tie on a piece of string to hang it from the ceiling.



- CP Bat
 - Use a clothes pin to make the bat body and feet. Cut out head and wing shapes from construction paper. Paint or color each piece as you like. Hold all pieces together with the clip.



- EC Bat
 - Use an empty egg carton to make the body and wings. Cut out 3 cups from the egg carton, and snip pieces from the 2 outside cups to resemble bat wings. Paint or color as you like. Glue or tie a ribbon to the top so it can hang.

