

Threats to bats

HUMANS ARE BATS BIGGEST THREAT!

We destroy their habitats: roosts and feeding areas are lost as forests are cut down and caves are blasted, disturbed and closed.

PESTICIDES POISON BATS as well as insects. They also reduce bat food supply.

BATS ARE HUNTED for food and traditional medicine, even though there is no scientific evidence that bat potions work. Hunting has caused the extinction of several species of fruit-eating bats.



How to help our bats!

BE NICE TO BATS! Do not kill bats! They will not harm you. Do not eat bats or use traditional bat medicines. Do not disturb roosts. Once disturbed, bats usually do not return.

TRY ALTERNATIVES TO PESTICIDES. Spray pounded or cooked garlic, onion or chili on your plants and vegetables. This can act as a pest deterrent.

SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT BATS! Tell your friends the benefits of bats. Tell them how they can help too.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BATS. Bats are amazing creatures. Contact the Malaysian Bat Conservation Research Unit to find out more about their bat research, conservation or to receive bat education materials (including a copy of our activity and information book).

Want to know more?



Contact the
**Malaysian Bat Conservation
Research Unit (MBCRU)**

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Illustrated by Zam

BATS



Bats are **MAMMALS** like humans; they give birth to live young and nurse them with milk.

There are 1111 species of bats in the world and in Malaysia we have 118 species. That's about 10% of all bat species and 40% of all Malaysian mammals!

Unfortunately 34 species of Malaysian bats are at risk of extinction.

Bat myths

BATS ARE NOT BLIND – they have eyes and can see.

ONLY 3 SPECIES DRINK BLOOD – they are only found in Central and South America, *not in Asia!*

BATS ARE NOT DIRTY – they spend a lot of their time grooming.



Where bats live

BATS LIVE IN MANY DIFFERENT PLACES. These are called roosts.

ROOSTS NEED TO BE SAFE, cool and not too far from food. Caves, buildings and hollow trees are used as roosts, but some bats just hang out under leaves or branches.

BATS LIVE IN VARIOUS SIZED GROUPS, from a single bat under a leaf to a colony of millions in a cave!

What and how bats eat

DIFFERENT BAT SPECIES EAT DIFFERENT FOODS. Generally in Malaysia some eat fruit, some nectar, but most eat insects!

PLANT-VISITING BATS of Malaysia use vision and smell to find ripe fruit and flowers.

INSECT-EATING BATS detect food by echolocation.

Insect-eating bats produce sounds and then listen for the returning echo. This is called echolocation, a technique they use to find their way around and to find food.



Why we need bats

DISEASE AND PEST CONTROL

Insect-eating bats can eat up to 600 mosquito-sized insects in 1 hour! So they can make a major contribution to pest and disease control.

POLLINATION OF ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT PLANTS

In Malaysia around 31 plants rely on bats for pollination. In particular, we should look after the Lesser Dawn Bat. This plant-visiting species pollinates both durian and petai. The durian trade alone is worth 120 million dollars a year!

31 Malaysian plant species rely on bat pollination

FOREST REGENERATION

Fruit bats play a major role in forest regeneration by dispersing seeds. Ripe fruit is taken from the tree, and the seeds are spat out or spread through droppings.

