

Average weight: Most microbats weigh between 2g and 20g, and have wingspans of approx 25 cms.

Diet: Microbats need energy rich food – moths, beetles, flying termites and mosquitoes, eating up to 50% of their body weight each night.

Appearance: Small, furry and brownish, with a range of unusual ears and noses to help with echolocation: faces only a mother could love!

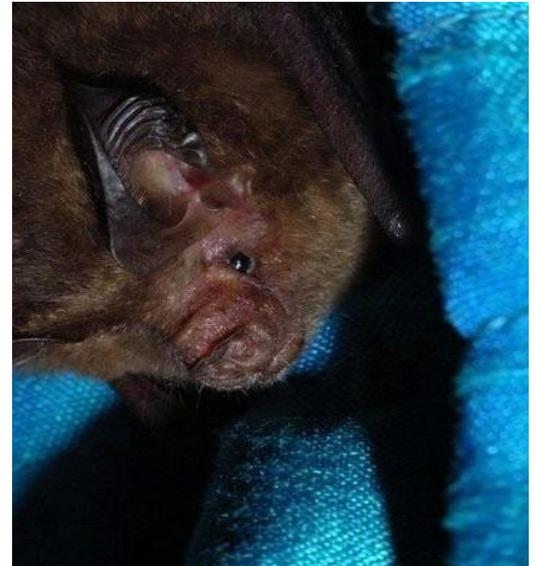
Where am I found: In all parts of Australia, with some using caves to hibernate, while others use tree bark and hollows. Some species have adapted to living in urban areas, in roof and wall cavities, closed pool umbrellas, and washing left on clothes lines overnight.

Other key information: Although microbats are 'common', that is, they make up one of the largest groups of mammals – 20% of world's total, and are found throughout Australia, most lack 'common names' and are rarely seen because of their small size and nocturnal habits.

Photo by John Lawson, Binna Burra 2008

Microbats

Nyctophilus bifax



DID YOU KNOW?

INTERESTING FACT # 1

Microbats only have one baby a year, weighing 20% of the mother's body weight. They are fed with milk for several months.

INTERESTING FACT # 2

Microbats and Flying foxes are the only mammals that truly fly. Because of this, their hind legs have been modified, and they cannot stand, and instead, hang when resting.

INTERESTING FACT # 3

Microbats have good eyesight, but hunt using sonar, sending a high frequency call outside human hearing, up to 200 times per second, and listening for the echo.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP THIS SPECIES SURVIVE?

You can be aware of the way microbats have an important role in keeping insect numbers under control. They are also a major food source for predatory night birds, like Tawny Frogmouths and Powerful Owls.

They need to be included in environmental studies before tree clearing is carried out, and their maternity caves need to be protected.

Wind turbines are proving to be a hazard to microbats, and research to prevent this is needed.

Many microbats are threatened by climate change, as their daytime roosting temperatures are very precise.

Introduced animals, such as cats and foxes hunt microbats as well as native birds.

Old buildings and bridges need to be checked before being demolished, as they may provide roosting sites. In UK, regulations protecting microbat roosting sites are firmly endorsed.

Compiled by Carole West

PO BOX 157, YAMBA NSW 2464



WWW.WILDLIFESOS.ORG.AU