

FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

Mexican Long-tongued Bat
(Choeronycteris mexicana)

ORDER: Chiroptera
FAMILY: Phyllostomidae

Conservation Status: Near Threatened.

Mexican long-tongued bats feed on fruits, pollen, nectar, and probably insects. The populations that summer in the United States migrate to Mexico and northern Central America in winter, following the blooming cycle of plants such as agaves (century plants) and some cacti. They are members of a very diverse, mostly tropical family of leaf-nosed bats, the Phyllostomidae. The nose leaf, which looks like a small triangular bump near the tip of the nose, may help direct the ultrasonic echolocation signals the bat sends through its nostrils.

Also known as:
Hog-nosed Bat

Sexual Dimorphism:
None

Length:
Range: 81–103 mm

Weight:
Range: 10–25 g



Mexican long-tongued bat (*Choeronycteris mexicana*) on left and Mexican long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris nivalis*) on right
Credit: painting by Wendy Smith from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



FIELD NOTES

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Hairy-legged Vampire Bat
(Diphylla ecaudata)

ORDER: Chiroptera
 FAMILY: Phyllostomidae

Conservation Status: Near Threatened.

Vampire bats are amazingly well-equipped to live on a diet of blood and only blood – something no other mammal in the world does. Its teeth are so razor-sharp that the bird or mammal it feeds on usually does not even feel the tiny bite it inflicts. The bat's saliva contains a chemical that keeps the blood flowing, and its tongue is grooved – the bat uses it almost like a straw. As soon as the bat feeds, it urinates. Its body retains the nourishing part of the blood but gets rid of the water, so that it does not have to fly away carrying an extra load of weight. *Diphylla ecaudata* is one of three species of vampire bats, all of which are found only in the New World tropics. Only one specimen of a vampire bat has ever been found in the United States, in Texas in 1967, and it probably had wandered some 700 km north from its breeding population..

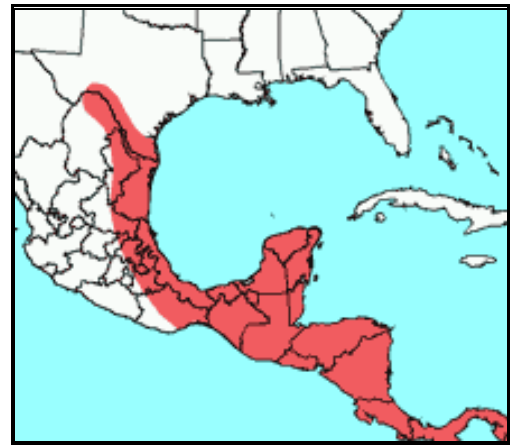
Sexual Dimorphism:
 None

Length:
 Average: 83 mm
 Range: 67–93 mm

Weight:
 Average: 31 g
 Range: 24–43 g



Credit: painting by Wendy Smith from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)



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Mexican Long-nosed Bat
(Leptonycteris nivalis)

ORDER: Chiroptera
FAMILY: Phyllostomidae

Conservation Status: Endangered.

The Mexican long-nosed bat feeds mainly on the nectar and pollen of agaves, and is found in Texas in June and July, when the plants are in bloom there. Then it migrates southward into Mexico, where it lives in pine-oak forests and deserts. It may be the main pollinator of a plant that has economic value in Mexico, the pulque plant. Little is known about the bat's pattern of reproduction. Nursing females and juvenile bats have been seen in Texas in June and July.

Also known as:
Big Long-nosed Bat

Sexual Dimorphism:
None

Length:
Average: 83 mm
Range: 76–88 mm

Weight:
Range: 18–30 g



Mexican long-tongued bat (*Choeronycteris mexicana*) on left, and Mexican long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris nivalis*) on right
Credit: painting by Wendy Smith from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



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Southern Long-nosed Bat

(Leptonycteris yerbabuena (Leptonycteris curasoae))

ORDER: Chiroptera
 FAMILY: Phyllostomidae

Conservation Status: Vulnerable.

The southern long-nosed bat is associated with arid grassland, scrub land, and tropical dry forest. Its daytime roosts include caves and abandoned mines, where upwards of 10,000 bats sometimes congregate. They are good long-distance fliers: some commute 30 km a night from their roosts to the places where they feed on nectar and pollen. North American populations of this bat migrate each year from the southwestern United States to northern and central Mexico, following the flowering season of nectaring plants such as agaves. The bats also feed on the flowers of silk trees, saguaro, and organ-pipe cactus, and even show up at hummingbird feeders. One individual may visit as many as 100 cacti each night. Southern long-nosed bats are the only pollinators of some plant species.



Leptonycteris yerbabuena – also known as *L. curasoae*
 Credit: painting by Wendy Smith from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)

Also known as:

Sanborn's Long-nosed Bat, Little Long-nosed Bat, Lesser Long-nosed Bat

Sexual Dimorphism:

None

Length:

Average: 81 mm
 Range: 75–85 mm

Weight:

Range: 15–25 g



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California Leaf-nosed Bat
(Macrotus californicus)

ORDER: Chiroptera
FAMILY: Phyllostomidae

Conservation Status: Vulnerable.

California leaf-nosed bats usually use their sense of sight (rather than echolocation) when they are foraging, and resort to echolocation only in total darkness. They fly slowly, close to the ground or to vegetation, and often take butterflies and katydids, which are immobile at night when the bats are hunting. They do not migrate or hibernate. They cope with the temperate desert by finding warm daytime roosts in caves, mines, or buildings. In the winter, large groups roost together in long, warm mine tunnels, usually in geothermally-heated rock, and forage only for about two hours each night. Pups are born from May to July in maternity colonies that are also often located in caves. There are about 100–200 females in a maternity colony, each with a single pup.

Sexual Dimorphism:
None

Length:
Average: 94.3 mm
Range: 85–99 mm

Weight:
Range: 12–22 g



California leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*)
Credit: painting by Wendy Smith from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



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