An Introduction to Bats
Lizards, Birds and Frogs are not Mammals

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Bats are Mammals

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Bats are **not** rodents (rats/mice)

- Bat belong to a group called Chiroptera. This means ‘hand-wing’.
- There are more than 1000 species of bat.
- Chiroptera are more related to apes (and humans) than to rodents.

Photo derived from work by Oren Peles
Bats have been around for a long time. Fossil bats +50 million yrs.
Bats are the only mammals that can really fly
Bats are nocturnal and they like to hang upside down.
Bats use sound to find their way around at night and to find insects to eat.
Bat Detectors & Bat Detectives

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A place where a bat lives is called a ROOST.
Bat Diversity
There are more types of bats in the tropics than anywhere else
In Ireland we have 9 species of bat

- They all eat insects

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Lifecycle
In summer the mothers live together in a nursery roost
Babies are born in June or July, blind and without fur

- Babies are born (bats do not lay eggs)
- Mothers feed their babies milk
- The babies are able to fly and eat insects after about 6 weeks
In late summer the bats leave the nursery roost. They hibernate in winter.

- There are no insects to eat in winter.
- This bat is hibernating in a cave and is covered in little drops of water.

Image copyright Paul van Hoof
Some Irish Bat Species
The pipistrelles are Ireland’s smallest mammals

Soprano Pipistrelle

Common Pipistrelle

Image copyright Tina Aughney
Brown long-eared bat – its ears are the same length as its body!
Ireland’s largest bat, Leisler’s bat, has very small ears.
Daubenton’s bat flies over rivers scooping up insects with its tail
The lesser horseshoe bat is found in the west of Ireland.
Myths and truths about bats
There is no such thing as a blind bat

By Anton Croos  
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Bats do not get caught in people’s hair

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Bats just have one baby in a year

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Bats do not build nests

• This is a bird’s nest!
• Bats just hang upside down in a roost, sometimes in clusters sometimes on their own.

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Vampire bats live in South America
All around the world bats do lots of good things for people

- They eat lots of insects that bite us or eat our food crops
- They pollinate fruit that humans eat
- They spread seeds so that new trees can grow
- In some countries people collect bat guano (poo!) as fertiliser