

Tropical Factsheets

Bats

- Bats are the only mammals which have powered flight. (Other mammals like possums can fly by gliding.)
- By hanging upside-down, bats don't need large hip and leg muscles. **Tiny legs** reduce flight loads and make flying more efficient.
- Bats are **not blind**, although many have small eyes.
- Some bats **drink** by wetting their fur as they fly over water, and then they lick up the moisture later.
- In the rainforests of the Wet Tropics there are **44 species of bats**. This is **over 60%** of the total number of bat species in Australia.
- The smallest bat in these rainforests is the **Cape York pipistrelle** (*Pipistrellus adamsi*) which weighs 5 grams –the same as an empty matchbox.
- Bats are very important for pollinating rainforest trees and dispersing their seeds.
- Many fruit species such as avocados, mangoes and bananas also depend on bats for pollination and seed dispersal.
- A bat's wing membrane, or **patagium** is supported by the arm and by four very elongated fingers. The scientific name for bats is **Chiroptera** which means 'winged hand'.
- Bats are divided into **two groups**:
 - The **microbats** or small hand-wings (**micros**)
 - The **megabats** or large hand-wings (**megas**).



*Queensland
tube-nosed bat*