



FLYING FOX BAT










Scientific order: *Chiroptera* (the only flying mammals) Genus: *Pteropus*

Description: Flying foxes are the largest of all bats. Their wingspans can measure up to 5' or more, and they can weigh up to 3.5 lbs. Females are usually smaller than males. They resemble a fox, with small eyes and large ears, but they do not have a tail. They have dark, dense fur, which covers their bodies (even toes!), but not their wings.

FUN FACTS



-  There are more than 60 species of flying foxes.
-  Colonies can have up to 200,000 bats.
-  Flying foxes can fly up to 25 mph and beat their wings an average of 120 times per minute.
-  They are nocturnal, so they sleep during the day and search for food at night.
-  They have great night vision and sense of smell. Unlike insect-eating bats, they do not use sonar or echolocation (the use of high-frequency sounds to hunt in midair).
-  Flying foxes pollinate the flowers of many plants in their native habitats and are the only known pollinators of some rainforest species. They also disperse the plants' seeds.
-  Over half of the known species of flying foxes are threatened by human activity and in danger of becoming extinct.

FAVORITE PLANTS & COLORS

As generalists, flying foxes eat nectar, pollen, blossoms, fruit, seeds, and leaves from flowering and fruit-producing trees that are native to their habitat such as eucalyptus, lillipillies, and fig. They only consume cultivated fruits (i.e. mango, banana, papaya) when their natural diet is in short supply. Many native trees have evolved to have light-colored blossoms and fruit, which can easily be seen to flying foxes at night, although they are mostly attracted by the smell of the plants.



HABITAT

Flying foxes are distributed on tropical landmasses from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific Ocean. They live in forests near the coastal areas of Australia, Asia, and Africa, and many islands in between. They prefer rainforest but can also be found in mangrove forests, coconut groves, and fruit orchards.

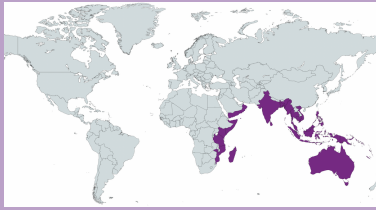


HELP FLYING FOXES THRIVE

To help these long-distance pollinators travel between remnant forests, urban gardeners in Australia are planting wildlife corridors with native and nectar-giving trees.



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D I S T R I B U T I O N

Flying foxes can be found on the Eastern hemisphere in the coastal areas of the countries shown on the map. They prefer warmer weather, access to fresh water, tall vegetation, and protection from temperature extremes.

