



LESSER LONG-NOSED BAT



Photo credit: ©MerlinTuttle.org



Scientific name: Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuenae

Description: Lesser long-nosed bats are known for their "noseleaf," an upward-turned hook that points off the tip of their elongated muzzle. These bats have tan, rust, or cinnamon-colored bodies that are usually around 3" long, which is also about the same length as their tongues! They have gray wings and a wingspan of about 10". They weigh about 1 oz, have a short tail, and small ears.

Photo credit: J. Scott Altenbach

FUN FACTS



- Like all bats, lesser long-nosed bats are nocturnal, meaning they are active at night.
- During the day, the bats sleep in warm caves that trap their body heat. At night, around midnight to 2am, they leave the roost to search for food.
- They live in extremely large colonies, with some having over 100,000 bats!
- Not only do these bats pollinate the flowers of desert cacti, they also help propagate them by consuming the fruits and spreading the seeds throughout their extensive habitat range.
- Using their long noses and tongues, they are able to reach deep into cacti blossoms for nectar. Their hairy heads are then covered with pollen, which is spread to other flowers as they continue feeding.
- Long-nosed bats have great memory and can keep track of which plants are about to flower, already knowing where to go on their next nighttime visit.
- From spring through fall, lesser long-nosed bats live in the southwestern U.S. However, they migrate using a 600 mile "nectar trail" to spend their winters in Mexico.

FAVORITE PLANTS & COLORS

Lesser long-nosed bats eat the nectar and fruit from night-blooming desert cacti such as saguaro, organ pipe, and agave.

Desert blooms are white or light-colored, making them more visible at night. Cacti flowers also produce a strong fragrance that attracts the bats to pollinate them.



HABITAT

Lesser long-nosed bats are found in dry or semi-arid regions and desert scrub habitats. Its migratory range includes Arizona, New Mexico, and throughout México, including the Sonoran Desert. They can also be found in dry, pine, or coniferous forests at high elevations.



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HELP LONG-NOSED BATS THRIVE

In 1988, the lesser long-nosed bat was added to the Endangered Species list when there were only around 1,000 left. However, as a result of improved roost site management and restoration of their food sources, this species of bat was removed from the list 30 years later and now has a population of around 200,000!

To keep the lesser long-nosed bats thriving, it is important to preserve and protect their habitat and the plants that they feed on.

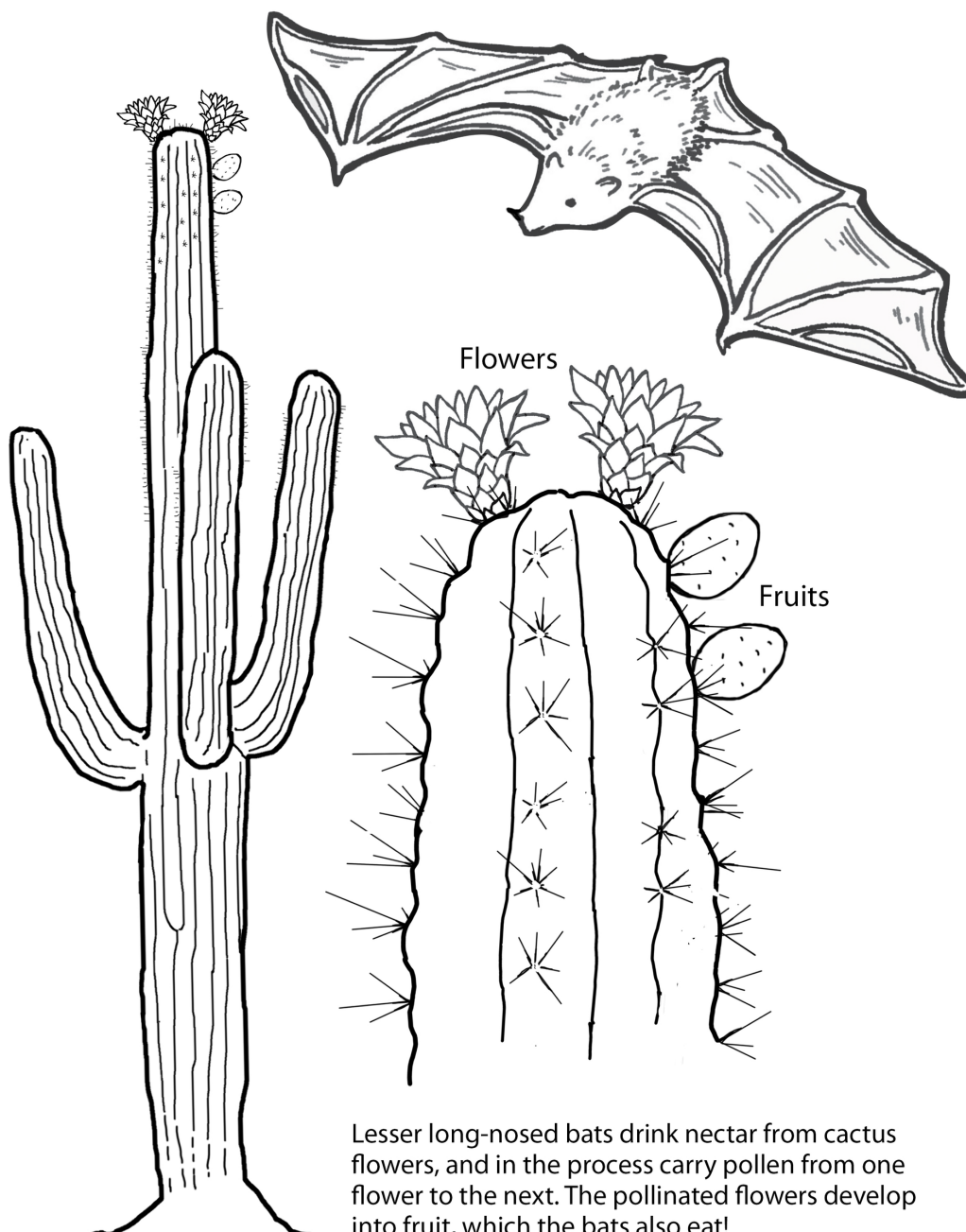


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SAGUARO CACTUS

A favorite of the lesser long-nosed bat, the saguaro cactus is the largest cactus in the U.S. They are exclusively found in the Sonoran Desert and are covered with spines to protect them from predators as well as from the extreme weather. They can grow to be 60 feet tall and when fully hydrated (after rainfall), they can weigh 4,800 pounds! Saguaros can live for up to 200 years, while their flowers only bloom for 24 hours.



Lesser long-nosed bats drink nectar from cactus flowers, and in the process carry pollen from one flower to the next. The pollinated flowers develop into fruit, which the bats also eat!

