

Get Curious! Animal Senses

Hearing



Barbastelle bat

The barbastelle is a rare bat that lives in woodland and hunts for food over a wide area. It has long, silky fur that is blackish-brown in colour, but with white tips. It has rounded ears that meet on the forehead, and a short, upturned nose, giving it a pug-like appearance.

Barbastelle pups

Barbastelle bats mate in autumn, hibernate over the winter (usually underground), and give birth to a single pup in late spring. Young bats are very small (less 2.5cm) with thin, slightly grey fur. Pups are suckled by their mothers for four to five weeks until they are old enough to fly. They then begin to venture out from the roost to forage for food.



Stefan Greif, Max Planck Institute for Ornithology

Did you know?

Bats feed on moths and other flying insects that they find in the dark by using echolocation. Bats send out sound waves from their mouth or nose. When the sound waves hit an object they produce echoes. The echo bounces off the object and returns to the bats' ears. Bats listen to the echoes to work out where the object is, how big it is, and its shape.

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I wonder...

Using the picture, what things could you wonder about? There doesn't need to be an answer! Here are some examples:

- I wonder where this bat is flying to.
- I wonder where it lives.
- I wonder how far it has flown.
- I wonder if it lives in this cave.

Talk together

- Describe the scene. (Bat in tree hollow)
- Talk about how bats use echolocation to help them fly in the dark.
- Discuss if you would like to have to travel in the daytime or night-time and why.
- Would you like to fly?
- Would you like to hibernate each winter?



Ideas for home



SENSORY: Ask your child to close their eyes. Create sounds with household objects, see if they can recognise what they are.

DRAMA: Imagine you are a bat at night. Bats make high-pitched sounds to help them find their way at night using echolocation. Make 'pings' and 'clicks' as you fly!

CRAFT: Create a roll of black card or paint a cardboard tube black. Add black bat-wing shaped card to the back and use white paper to make eyes for the front.