

THE ARBORETUM AT PENN STATE



# BIG BROWN BAT

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**NAME:** *Eptesicus fuscus*

#### CONSERVATION STATUS:



**SIZE:** 4–5 inches

**WEIGHT:** .4–.9 ounces

**GROUP TERM:** cloud; colony

**NUMBER OF YOUNG:** 1–2

**HABITAT:** generalist; dark caves

**LIFESPAN:** 19–20 years

#### DISTRIBUTION:



# BIG BROWN BAT

## DESCRIPTION

The only mammals capable of true flight, bats are one of the most widespread mammals in North America. Having adapted well to the presence of humans, the big brown bat can be found roosting and hibernating in barns, houses, churches, and caves. This nocturnal species plays an important role in maintaining insect populations, with each bat able to consume up to 5,000 bugs in a single night. Despite their reputation, bats are largely harmless and serve as bioindicators of the environment's health.

## DIET

An expert flier, the big brown bat uses echolocation to catch insects on the wing at dusk. This tiny creature uses its powerful jaws to crack through the exoskeleton of beetles, one of its favorite foods.

## THREATS

Both big and little brown bats have been adversely affected by white-nose syndrome, a fungus that has killed over 5.5 million bats since 2006. Natural predators of the big brown bat include hawks and owls, snakes, raccoons, and house cats.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Big brown bats are one of the fastest bat species, capable of reaching speeds of up to 40 miles per hour.
- Hanging upside-down assists bats in digesting their prey!
- Big brown bats roost in maternal colonies of 20 to 100 adults, with females responsible for the care and feeding of young.

"Big Brown Bat." Shenandoah National Park. National Park Service: U.S. Department of the Interior, Feb. 2016. Web. 22 June 2017.

"Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)." Arkive, n.d. Web. 22 June 2017.

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