



Straw Colored Fruit Bats

Eidolon helvum



Hi, we are the Straw-Colored Fruit Bats, we like climbing and hanging upside down! We like to live in a large group.

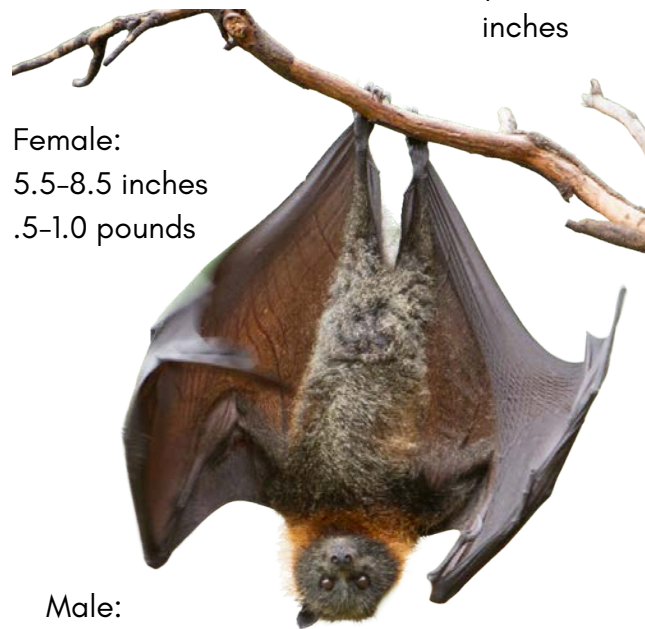
The following bats live in the Discovery Center: Butterfinger, Atomic Fireball, Junior Mint, Nougat, Tac, Snickers, Hershey, Razzle, Juju Bee, Twix and Wrigley.

We also have **two education ambassador bats** who live off-exhibit named Seamus and Lemonhead.

BATS AT A GLANCE

- The species name “helvum” comes from the Latin word “helvus” which means honey-yellow, referring to the bat’s coloration.
- Straw-colored fruit bats have large cheek pouches to carry food to safer locations for consumption.
- Straw-colored fruit bats do not use echolocation, only their senses of smell and sight to find food.
- The difference between bats that can echolocate and cannot echolocate, is the ones that can echolocate don’t have a bony channel around the cochlea part of the ear.

Wingspan:
up to 30
inches



Female:
5.5-8.5 inches
.5-1.0 pounds

Male:
5.5-8.5 inches
.5-1.0 pounds

Avg. life expectancy in native habitats: 15 years
Avg. life expectancy in human care: 22 years

WHERE ARE STRAW COLORED FRUIT BATS HABITATS LOCATED?



Straw Colored Fruit Bats are the most widely distributed African fruit bat. They are visible in most of the sub-Saharan Africa, although their range has shrunk from historical populations. They occupy a wide range of habitats, from coastal forests to dry, arid regions, and rainforests at elevations ranging from sea level to 2000 m.

Bat Behaviors

SLEEPING

Straw Colored Fruit Bats are **nocturnal**, meaning they are most active at night

You might see our bats in the Discovery Center with red lights, allowing us to see them, while letting them sleep!



EATING

While they are frugivores, straw-colored fruit bats don't actually eat the entirety of fruit they find. They mash the fruit in their mouth, extracting the juices, then spit out the pulp.



CHATTERING

They use acoustic and tactile communication to talk to one another.

Some male bats sing to attract mates!



STRETCHING

Just like humans stretch to relieve a cramp or get our muscles loose, we like to stretch out our wings during long periods of rest.



- These fruit bats roost in colonies of 100,000- 1,000,000 individuals. Bats roost upside down, usually in large social groups, in caves, trees and man-made structures.
- All bats live on milk from birth up to six months of age.
- The straw-colored fruit bat is the second largest bat in Africa.
- Females only have one baby, called a pup, per year, although some species may have twins or quadruplets. A mother bat can locate her pup by its scent and sound out of millions in a roost.
- Some bats eat fruit, nectar, fish and three species even drink animal blood.

Bat Conservation

Straw Colored Fruit Bats and native WI Little Brown Bats play vital roles in their habitats by dispersing nutrients, pollinating fruit-producing plants, and controlling insect populations, impacting mosquito bites and malaria transmission.

Straw Colored Fruit Bat are currently listed as **Near Threatened** due to being hunted for bushmeat because the bats will damage crops. They are generally considered pests in the Ivory Coast because they are known to strip the bark off trees.



How can we help?

Straw-colored fruit bats are important pollinators for tree species across the continent of Africa. Though some animals can be seen as pests, it is important to learn to coexist with them to keep our ecosystems healthy. Plant native flowers and bushes in your yard to support the pollinators in your neighborhood. If you see a bat in need of assistance, reach out to a local wildlife rescue or humane society rather than moving them on your own.