



## BATS ARE DECLINING – Threatening our way of life

Bat numbers are declining worldwide causing negative impacts on the environment.

### Bats are declining due to:

- Loss of habitats and roosting trees
- Light pollution as cities develop
- Direct persecution by humans who fumigate their roosts or hunt them for food

### Loss of bats means:

- Lower crop yields for farmers due to increasing numbers of insect pests
- Loss of fruits as fewer plants will be pollinated
- More mosquitoes and consequently, malaria



## HELP BATS TO HELP YOU!

This is a wakeup call to all - it is high time we help bats to help ourselves.

African Bat Conservation (ABC) is one of the flagship projects of the charity Conservation Research Africa. We conduct applied research, conservation and education to bring bats to the conservation agenda and conserve bat populations in Africa.

For more information visit

[www.africanbatconservation.org](http://www.africanbatconservation.org)

Do you need advice or assistance with bats your property?

## CALL US FOR HELP

ABC are now running a TOLL FREE advice and assistance helpline. This is FREE of charge, call our experts to get advice or arrange a home visit.

## Wildlife Assistance Helpline: 5152



## WHAT CAN BATS DO FOR YOU

What are bats and why should we care?



Bats are animals of the night that live in our midst, most notably in buildings and trees

They bring with them myths and misunderstandings that have been passed from generation to generation

Bats are often misunderstood as most people are not aware of their role in the environment and their benefits to mankind

However, there are in fact many benefits from bats. Let's take a closer look at these fascinating animals



## BAT TRUTHS!

### Debunking bat myths

- **Bats are not all disease ridden** - Contrary to common belief, bats are clean animals that rarely spread diseases unless eaten or if they are allowed to bite
- **Not all bats transmit Ebola** – Very few bats carry Ebola. Some migratory bat species may carry the disease but transmission to humans is only by eating bats
- **Not all bats have rabies** - Very few bats have rabies and there is no risk if bats are not handled. Avoiding touching bats avoids the risk



- **Bats are not blind** - Bats are active at night and have great vision. Most bats can see better than humans after dark!
- **Bats are not flying mice** – Bats are not even remotely related to mice – they are quite unique mammals



## BENEFITS OF BATS

- **Fruit bats are pollinators** and disperse seeds of widely eaten fruits like Masuku, mangos, baobab and other large seeded fruit
- **Bats help forests regenerate** by spreading seeds
- **Insect eating bats reduce mosquitoes** which are responsible for transmitting malaria – so bats in your roof are keeping you healthy!
- **Bats provide a free pest control service** by eating thousands of agricultural crop pests like boll worms and stink bugs. This reduces the need for chemical pesticides and increases crop yields



## GETTING FAMILIAR WITH BATS

- Bats are mammals just like humans however bats are unique because of their ability to fly
- They are **warm-blooded**, suckle their young and have **fur like all mammals**
- Bats are eaten by snakes, owls, hawks and falcons

## BAT FACTS

- There are over **1,300 bat species** in the world
- **Malawi has over 64 species**
- Bats usually give birth to 1-2 offspring a year
- Bats are either: insect-eaters, fruit-eaters nectar-feeders or carnivores (eating frogs, fish or other bats)
- Bats use **echolocation** for hunting and navigation

