

Egyptian Fruit Bat

Scientific Name: *Rousettus aegyptiacus*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Chiroptera

Family: Pteropodidae



The Egyptian Fruit Bat is a fairly small species that is only 9 inches long with a wing spread of 16 to 20 inches and weighing 3 to 6 ounces. Males are noticeably larger than females. The coloring is uniformly brownish with the under parts lighter. Egyptian Fruit Bats have a large dog-like muzzle that is long and pointed. Their eyes are large and their ears which are simple and erect, are constantly in motion. They roost in tombs, temples, rock crevices, trees and caves. Since they don't echolocate very well, they are never far from the entrance when they inhabit a cave. At nighttime they may fly 20 to 25 miles from where they roost to their feeding grounds. The feeding grounds may change continuously as different trees fruit and flower. Some colonies may make only short migrations. When roosting these bats are crowded together and disputes are common and noisy.

Range

Egyptian Fruit Bats can be found from Pakistan to Egypt and in Africa from the north to the south of the Sahara.

Habitat

Egyptian Fruit Bats inhabit a wide variety of habitats, wherever fruit and flowers are found.

Gestation

Gestation in Egyptian Fruit Bats lasts about four months. Maturity is reached at about 9 months of age. They breed readily in captivity.

Litter

They usually give birth to one, and at times twins, once each year.

Behavior

Like many bats, Egyptian Fruit bats are nocturnal. They spend their days roosting in trees or caves, often with large groups of other bats, sometimes numbering in the thousands. They emerge from the roost to forage for food in the late evening and return just before dawn. They hang upside down, with their wings folded closely around their bodies. Egyptian fruit bats, along with other species in the genus *Rousettus*, are the only megachiropteran bats to use echolocation, which they accomplish by emitting a series of sharp clicks with their tongues. Clicks are normally slow and constant and speed up dramatically when the bats approach an object. They also make use of a range of vocalizations for communication, including grunts and screeches. As a result, a large roosting colony can be a deafening cacophony.

Reproduction

The young are carried by the female until they can hang from the roost on their own (after about 6 weeks), then they are left in the roost while the mother forages for food. Once the baby can fly, at about 3 months of age, the baby will leave the roost on its own to hunt for its own food. Offspring typically stay with the same colony as the parents for their entire lives.

Wild Diet

Egyptian fruit bats are frugivorous, consuming large amounts of fruit each night. Wild dates tend to be a favorite, but they consume almost any soft, pulpy fruit. Most of their diets tend to consist of unripe fruit and insect- and fungus-damaged fruit, which allows them to thrive in habitats where ripe fruit are not available year-around.