

# Straw-Colored Fruit Bat

**Scientific Name:** *Eidolon helvum*

**Class:** Mammalia

**Order:** Chiroptera

**Family:** Pteropodidae



The straw-colored fruit bat is a Megachiroptera, typically very large, about 5 to 8 inches (130 to 210 mm) in length. The neck and back are yellow brown (hence, the name of straw-color), but the underside fur is a darker brown color. The wings are long and narrow, with a span of as much as 30 inches, allowing the bats to fly long distances. The bat has a long snout like a dog, large eyes and is popularly referred to as a flying fox. The male bat resembles the female but is slightly larger.

---

## Range

Straw colored fruit bats are common in central Africa, but they can migrate to all of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula south of the Sahara Desert and Madagascar.

## Habitat

Forest and savanna regions, in trees, caves and protected areas to elevations of 7000 feet

## Gestation

9 months total, but embryonic development is only 4 to 5 months

## Litter

1

## Behavior

Straw-colored fruit bats occupy a wide range of habitats. They are a very social animal, and roost in colonies, typically in trees, numbering over 100,000 individuals. Typically, the fruit bat does not echolocate. The bat is nocturnal, and it seeks food at night, using its excellent senses of sight and smell. These fruit bats have a peculiar habit of chewing on soft wood, probably to obtain water and moisture.

## Reproduction

The straw-colored fruit bat reaches sexual maturity at about 18 months of age. Mating occurs from April to June, but implantation of the embryo for development in the uterus is delayed ensuring birth of the single pup during September to October. This takes advantage of the rainy season, for the mating and birth processes, when food is more abundant. The female gives parental care, nursing her offspring until it is ready to forage on its own.

## Wild Diet

Flowers, fruits and fruit juices