

FIJIAN MASTIFF BAT

What are they called?

Scientific:

Chaerephon bregullae

English:

Fijian Free-tailed Bat

French:

Bislama:

Vernacular (local name):

A little bit about them:

These are micro-bats that use sonar to find their food (echolocation). They eat insects and can be seen flying around to catch them in coconut groves, on farmland, in forests and even over the sea, near to the coast.

They are found on Malo and Santo but their biggest population is in Fiji.

Not very much is known about them.

They roost in large numbers often thousands, inside caves. They breed seasonally with the young being born around December.

What do they look like?

These are small bats. Their bodies are about 6 cm long. They have very distinctive faces and long thick tails and the large ears with smooth margins. Their fur is brownish grey all over their body.



Source: <http://www.planet-mammiferes.org>

Did you know?

- This bat is the only mastiff bat that lives in Vanuatu.
- This bat is only found in Vanuatu and Fiji.
- It used to live in Tonga as well but it became extinct from Tonga in prehistoric times.



Source: <http://www.planet-mammiferes.org>

Fijian Mastiff Bats are classified as Endangered (EN) on the IUCN Red List.

Why are they threatened?

- Disturbance of their roosting sites (caves).
- Hunted for food.
- They only roost and breed in a very few caves so the population is at risk if something happen to one or two of those caves.

Want to know more?

- ❖ Read more in the book *Mammals of the South-West Pacific & the Moluccan Islands* by Tim Flannery.
- ❖ Visit: www.iucnredlist.org

What do they do for us?

- Bats poo is known as guano and it is a very valuable source of organic fertilizer.
- They eat insects including some pests such as mosquitos and insects that eat crops.

What can we do for them?

- ✓ Identify roosting sites and protect them from disturbance.
- ✓ Record sightings, take pictures of mammals that you think could be Fijian Mastiff Bats.
- ✓ Observe and record which caves they roost in, where they go to feed and when they have young.
- ✓ Send the sightings information you collect to VESS or DEPC.

