

## What are they called?

**Scientific:** *Emballonura semicaudata*

**Other English:**

Polynesian sheath-tailed bat

**French:**

**Bislama:**

**Vernacular (local names):**

## A little bit about them:

These are medium-sized microbats that roost in caves. They forage in forests using a special skill called echolocation. They are insectivorous which means they feed only on insects such as moths, butterflies, bees, beetles, ants and termites.

These bats may not exist in Vanuatu. There are only 2 records, one from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the other a specimen labeled as from Santo in 1929. It is possible it was not labeled correctly and the bat was actually collected from Fiji, where the bats are more commonly seen.

## What do they look like?

The Pacific Sheath-tailed Bat has brown fur from head to tail. It has a small tail that is attached to the back edge of the wings. Their bodies are about 4 cm long and weigh about 8 g.



Source: Wikimedia Commons via Encyclopedia of Life

## Did you know?

- No recent scientific expeditions have been able to find this bat in Vanuatu.

Pacific sheath-tailed bats are classified as Endangered (EN) on the IUCN Red List.

### Why are they threatened?

- Disturbance of caves (roosting sites).
- The loss of their native forests foraging habitats due to agriculture, gardens and other development.
- They are only known to roost in a very small number of caves and if anything happens to any of the caves it could significantly impact the population.

### Want to know more?

- ❖ Read more on the book: ***Mammals of the South-West Pacific & the Moluccan Islands*** by Tim Flannery.
- ❖ Visit: [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)

### What 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?

- ✓ Protect any known roosting sites.
- ✓ Record sightings and take pictures of bats that you think could be Pacific Sheath-tailed bats and pass them on to VESS or DEPC so we can verify whether this bat does really exist in Vanuatu.

