

Bats in the Macquarie Marshes



Rachel V. Blakey, 2013

In this flooded river red gum forest, I recorded over 1000 bats with one bat detector in a single night! We recorded 4 times as many bats in wet habitats than in dry habitats.

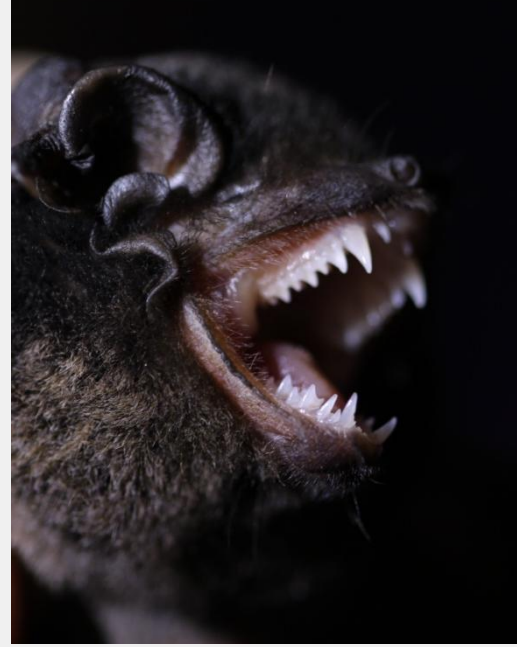


Long-eared bats prefer to fly under cover of trees. They prefer river red gums but we also recorded them foraging in the dry forest near the school.



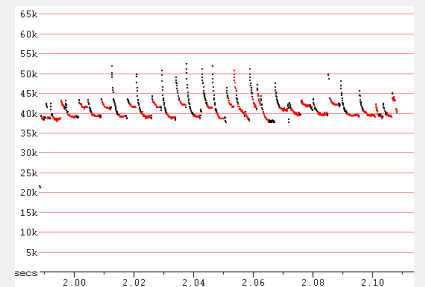
For every different type of environment in the Macquarie Marshes there's a type of bat that uses it. The Little Pied bat, a threatened species, were most common foraging over these dry open paddocks. Since they can eat up to their bodyweight in insects per night, just think of what they can do for our crops!

Bats love wetlands and rivers. They need to drink water regularly, especially females who are nursing young. They also feast on all the insects that emerge from watercourses and some bats even catch fish.



Bats are everywhere! They occur on every continent except Antarctica, and in the Macquarie Marshes there's at least 12 different species!

Freetail bats are fast flyers and not shy of flying out in the open, these bats were most common foraging over the open swamps like these reed beds.



We identify bat species by catching them or by looking at their calls. This distinctive Little Pied bat call has an alternating frequency.