

Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*)



Taxonomy:

Family Molossidae. Also called Brazilian free-tailed bat or Guano bat. Nine subspecies are recognized. The regional race is *Tadarida brasiliensis mexicana*.

Description:

Distinguished from other regional bats by its distinctive “free-tail” which extends beyond the tail membrane. Distinguished from the uncommon Big free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops macrotis*) by its smaller size and ears that are not joined across the forehead.

Total length: 85-109 mm; Tail: 31-41 mm; Hind foot: 8-12mm; Ear: 14-20 mm; Forearm: 36-46 mm; Weight:10-15 g.



Distribution:

Southern US, from California to Kansas, eastward along the Gulf and lower Atlantic coasts, and south throughout Mexico into Central America. Common along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and diet:

Free-tailed bats undergo seasonal migrations, moving north during spring and summer to form large colonies. During winter, they form hibernation colonies. The major roosts are in natural caves where colonies can number in the millions. They also roost

in mines and buildings. Their diet consists mainly of moths and other flying insects that they catch while foraging in open habitat, often at high altitudes.

Life History:

Females bear single offspring in late spring - early summer. Females and dependent young form large maternity colonies. Young are weaned in about 6 weeks. Life span may exceed 10 years.

References: Wilkins 1989; McCracken 1999.