



# WILDLIFE IN THE YOUNG SHIRE

## MICROBATS

*Microchiropterans*

### 1. WHAT ARE MICROBATS?

- \* Microbats are mammals, so we are warm-blooded, covered in hair and feed our young milk.
  - \* All bats are grouped into the Order Chiroptera and then divided into Megachiropterans (flying foxes or fruit bats) and Microchiropterans (microbats or insectivorous bats).
  - \* Microchiropteran means “little hand-wing”,
  - \* Along with the flying foxes or fruit bats, we are the only mammals that truly fly.
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- \* Our bodies are beautifully adapted for flight and are small and light in weight. Our bodies are anywhere between 3 to 9 cm long, with a wingspan of approximately 25cms. We can weigh between 2 and 20 grams depending on which species we are.
  - \* Our wings are like human hands, with a modified forearm, hand, thumb and fingers. The flight membrane is stretched over this framework and along the sides of the body to the legs.
  - \* The upper part of our body is very muscular, but our hindlegs are modified so we cannot stand, but hang when resting.
  - \* We have a range of different ears, noses and tails.
  - \* We are nocturnal, so we are active at night, although sometimes we emerge before dusk.
  - \* We are sometimes called ‘insectivorous bats’ and take advantage of warm nights to forage when the insect activity is at its peak.
  - \* We have good eyesight but hunt using echolocation.
  - \* If you listen carefully you can sometimes hear us. Most of our calls are very high pitched and inaudible to humans, but some can be heard and sound a bit like a cricket.



Chocolate Wattled Bat (*Chalinolobus morio*)  
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### 2. WHERE DO WE LIVE?

- \* We have a wide range of habitats and will roost anywhere that provides shelter.
- \* We have a flat head and body which allows us to utilise any small hole or crevice as a roost site.
- \* We have adapted well to urban living and can be found in wall and roof cavities, closed deck umbrellas and even washing left on the line overnight or hanging at the back door.
- \* In the wild we live in hollow trees, under bark, hollow fence posts or in caves.



# WILDLIFE IN THE YOUNG SHIRE

## 3. HOW CAN WE BE OF HELP TO YOU?

- \* We provide very important ecosystem services and play a vital role in the balance of nature.
- \* We do this by eating a variety of insects, many of which are pests to humans, stock animals and agricultural crops. We love mosquitoes, moths, beetles, caterpillars and termites.
- \* We can eat up to 40% of our body weight each night or several hundred insects.
- \* We are also an important source of food for predatory birds such as owls.

## 4. WHAT PROBLEMS DO I FACE IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

- \* Predation and injury from dogs and cats.
- \* As we live in dead timber, we are sometimes brought inside in firewood.
- \* If we are disturbed during winter when hibernating we are slow to wake up and we become easy prey.
- \* Use of pesticides in farming areas decreases our food sources and can also poison us.
- \* Removal of dead and living trees reduces our habitat.
- \* We are also susceptible to climate change, as our daytime roosting temperatures are very precise.

## 5. WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR US?

- \* Keep dogs and cats in at night. Don't let cats climb trees where I'm roosting.
- \* Check firewood to make sure I'm not sheltering inside.
- \* Sometimes I accidentally fly inside houses and can't get out, so open doors and windows, turn lights off inside and on outside and I will find my way out.
- \* Preserve our habitat, such as dead and living trees, especially those with hollows. We also roost and breed in old farm buildings and sheds.
- \* Enhance our habitat by planting local native trees and shrubs.
- \* Build and install a roosting box. Instructions are easily found on the internet.
- \* Reduce pesticide use. Let us control the insects.
- \* If you find one of us that needs assistance, call WIRES Weddin-Lachlan Branch on 02 6341 3399. Keep pets away and **DO NOT HANDLE US**.



Gould's Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus gouldi*)  
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