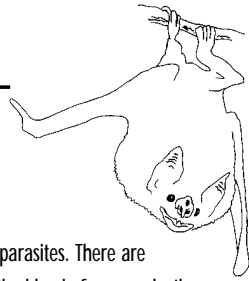


M A M M A L

COMMON VAMPIRE BAT



Scientific Name: *Desmodus rotundus*

Vampire bats may be the only mammals that are parasites. There are three species of vampire bats. One feeds only on the blood of mammals; the other two species prefer the blood of birds. These bats land close to a large animal, walk over to it, and make a small cut in the skin with their sharp front teeth. Their saliva contains anticoagulants (chemicals that keep blood from clotting) that keep a trickle of blood flowing, which they lap up.



STATUS: Common



DIET IN THE WILD: Blood of mammals

ZOO DIET: Cow blood



FUN FACTS: Vampire bats adopt orphaned bats and have been known to risk their lives to share food with less fortunate roost-mates. An anticoagulant from vampire bat saliva may soon be used to treat human heart disease.