



Vampire Bats

Vampire bats are the only mammals in the world that feed entirely on blood. They hang upside down from the roofs of caves in total darkness, sleeping during the day. Groups of vampire bats can number anywhere between 100 and 1,000. In one year, a colony of one hundred bats can drink the blood of 25 cows. The vampire bat is found in the Mexican tropics, Central America, and South America.

They come out to hunt during the darkest part of the night. They usually attack sleeping cows and horses, but from time to time they have also fed on people. They drink blood from their victim for about 30 minutes. They don't remove enough blood to do harm, but infections can develop at the bite site, and their bites can transmit diseases.

While other bats catch and eat food in flight, the first strike from a vampire bat is from the ground. After landing near their prey, they approach it on all fours. They are able to quickly run or hop along the ground. Though a liquid diet doesn't require teeth for chewing food, vampire bats do have several, razor sharp teeth. A heat sensor on the bat's nose helps it to locate a spot of flowing blood just beneath its victim's skin. After biting the animal and causing blood to flow, the bat laps it up with its tongue. Its saliva keeps the victim's blood from clotting.

Vampire bats are mammals. Baby bats cling to their mothers, even while their mothers are flying. They drink their mother's milk for about three months before they, too, begin their nightly stalks.

1. Vampire bats feed entirely on:

- a. blood b. their mother's milk c. cows

2. In a year, a colony of 100 vampire bats can drink the blood of _____ cows.

- a. 10 b. 25 c. 50

3. Vampire bats drink the blood of their victims for _____ minutes.

- a. 20 b. 30 c. 40

4. True or False: The vampire bat can run along the ground.

- a. true b. false

5. True or False: The vampire bat has a proboscis like a butterfly and uses it to suck up blood.

- a. true b. false