

Vampire bats  
.... Assorted facts and weird questions



- Vampire bats are native to North and South America from Mexico to Argentina.
- Vampire bats tend to live in colonies in almost completely dark places, such as caves, old wells, hollow trees, and buildings.
- These creatures are nocturnal and most active in the early night.
- Vampire bats roost alone, in small groups, or in colonies of thousands.
- They are very clean animals that frequently groom themselves as well as other bats.
- Vampire bats generally fly about one meter off the ground.
- Like the legendary monster from which they get their name, these small mammals drink the blood of other animals for survival.
- They feed on blood from sleeping cows, pigs, horses, and birds. Though uncommon, vampire bats occasionally bite humans for blood.
- Vampire bats have pretty good eyesight in the dark. They can see a cow from a distance of 130 meters at night.

1. 130 meters seems like a lot in the dark! About how far is that in feet or yards (1 meter = about 3.28 feet)? How can you relate this 130-meter distance to your world?

2. How does that compare to the length of a football field?

- Rather than sucking blood, vampire bats make a small cut with their teeth and then lap up the flowing blood with their tongues.
- These bats are so light and agile that they are sometimes able to drink blood from an animal for more than 30 minutes without waking it.
- They don't remove enough blood to harm the animal, but their bites can cause nasty infections and disease.
- Unlike some other species of bats, vampire bats can walk, run, and jump. They have very strong hind legs and a special thumb that helps them takeoff after feeding.
- Each night, vampire bats drink about half of their body weight in blood.

- A female vampire bat weighs about 40 grams and can consume 20 grams of blood in a 20-minute feeding. 20 grams of blood is about 20 milliliters.
  3. What percent of the bat's body weight does it drink in blood in 20 minutes?
  4. If a vampire bat can drink 20 ml of blood from a sleeping pig in 20 minutes what is its rate of blood consumption per hour?
  5. The average weight of a human is 140 pounds or about 64 kg. If the average human were to drink liquid in the same proportion to his or her weight as the vampire bat does in 20 minutes, about how much liquid would he or she have to drink?
  6. Lets get a little perspective here. How much liquid is that? How many 12-ounce cans of soda or seltzer? How many 2-liter bottles of soda? How many gallons of water or milk? (Actually, all liquid quantities don't weigh the same ... but they are pretty close. One gallon of liquid weighs about 8.5 pounds.)
- If they can't find blood for two nights in a row, vampire bats will die. Luckily, female bats can be generous; well-fed bats will often regurgitate blood to share with others in exchange for grooming.
- Vampire bats can actually be quite tame, and even friendly to humans.
- Owls, eagles and hawks are some of several predators of vampire bats.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vampire\\_bat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vampire_bat)  
[http://www.onekind.org/be\\_inspired/animals\\_a\\_z/vampirebats/](http://www.onekind.org/be_inspired/animals_a_z/vampirebats/)

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