Bats

Name: _____

At night, the creature you seeing flying near a streetlight could be a bat. Bats are flying mammals. There are about 1,100 bat species throughout the world. Of these, about 70 percent eat insects while the others eat fruit.

Bats are helpful to our environment. They pollinate flowers and disperse fruit seeds. In some tropical areas, the plants are dependent upon the bat for the distribution of their seeds!

Some bats are very small, just barely over an inch in length. Others have a wing span over four feet and can weigh over 3 pounds!

Microbats use echolocation. This is a perceptual system that causes ultrasonic sounds to be emitted which produce echoes. An echo is produced when the sound reaches and bounces off objects or prey. By comparing the outgoing and returning echoes, the bat is able to detect, localize, and even detect its prey in total darkness! Even though there is a saying, "Blind as a bat," none of the bats are actually blind. Some do have poor vision, though. Bats usually will not fly in the rain because the rain will interfere with their ability to locate their prey.

Most bats are nocturnal animals. They use the daylight hours to rest and hunt at night. Most of the food consumed by bats are insects, fruits, and flower nectar. A bat is able to consume about a third of its body weight in insects every night. It might eat several hundred insects in only a few hours. There are many kinds of fruits that bats will eat. They will usually take the fruit back to their roost, then crush open the fruit to get the juice. The seeds and pulp are spit out, enabling the seeds to take root and grow into new trees.

1. Bats belong to the reptile family.

   ○ true   ○ false

2. There are about _____ bat species in the world.

   ○ 1,500   ○ 1,100   ○ 1,300

3. Nearly 70 percent of bats eat only fruit.

   ○ true   ○ false

4. Bats help the environment by _____.

   ○ resting   ○ flying   ○ pollinating

5. Echolocation is used by _____.

   ○ microbats   ○ the prey   ○ all bats

6. All bats are blind.

   ○ true   ○ false

7. How does echolocation work?

   _____

   _____

8. Why won't bats fly in the rain?

   _____

   _____