

Flying Bat Straw Rockets

Discover bats and launch them into the air!



Materials Needed:

Bat Template printable (or draw your own), tape, straw, scissors, plastic pipette*, colored pencils or markers.

**If you don't have a plastic pipette, you can use a straw with a larger diameter, or roll a small piece of paper into a tube and tape the end shut.*

Instructions:

Step 1: Cut out the bat template. Decorate it with colored pencils or markers. Make it look realistic, or use your imagination!

Step 2: Cut a plastic pipette about one inch (2.5 cm) below the bulb. Turn the bat over and tape the pipette end to the back of the bat. Make sure the pipette is straight; if it is crooked, your bat will won't fly straight.

Step 3: Slip a straw into the end of the pipette.

Step 4: Launch your bat! Make sure that your launch area is clear of people and other hazards. Then gently blow into the straw to launch the bat. How far did it fly?



Try This: Experiment to see if you can make your bat fly farther or higher!

- Bend the bat's wings in different directions.
- Use straws of different lengths.
- Make the bat bigger or smaller.
- Hold the straw at different angles as you blow.
- Make a bat out of cardstock or construction paper.

Bats: The Flying Mammals

Bats are the only mammals who can fly. Other mammals, like the flying squirrel and flying lemur, glide rather than actually fly.



Bat wings. Image: National Park Service.

Bats are members of the order *Chiroptera*, which is Greek for “hand wing.” Bats have four long fingers and a thumb, connected by a thin layer of skin called a membrane. Their flexible wings and movable joints allow them to change direction quickly in midair. They can fold their wings the way we move our fingers, making bats excellent at maneuvering in the air.

There are more than 1,300 species of bats in the world, making them the second most common group of mammals after rodents. Bat species are incredibly diverse, ranging from the tiny bumblebee bat, weighing less than a penny, to giant flying foxes with six-foot wingspans.

Seven species of bats live in Alaska. The most common is the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), which lives in Interior, Southeast, and Southcentral Alaska. They are 3 to 4.5 inches (7.5 to 11 cm) in length. Little brown bats are generally nocturnal. They use echolocation to find food, which includes insects such as moths, mosquitoes, and beetles. They can eat up to 1,500 insects every night, which is about 50% of their body weight!



Little brown bat. Image: Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

In the cold Alaska winters, there are few insects for bats to eat. So bats hibernate for the winter, lowering their body temperature, metabolism, and breathing rate to reduce the amount of energy they need.

Scientists are working to learn more about bats in Alaska, so we can help them survive. You can get involved by reporting when you see a bat, or by monitoring their roosts. Learn more at:

www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifediversity.citizenscience&project=bats

Bat Template Printable

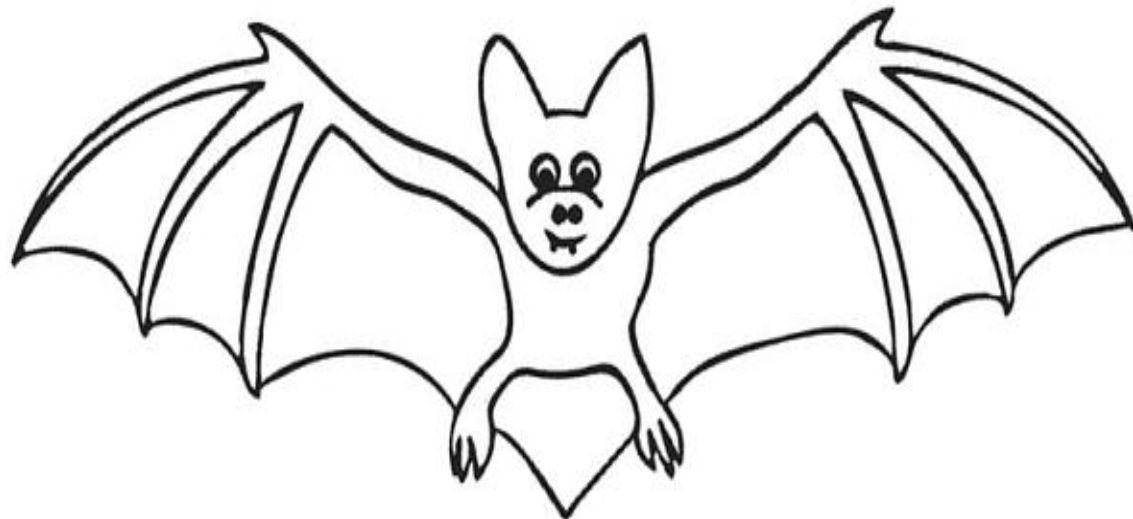
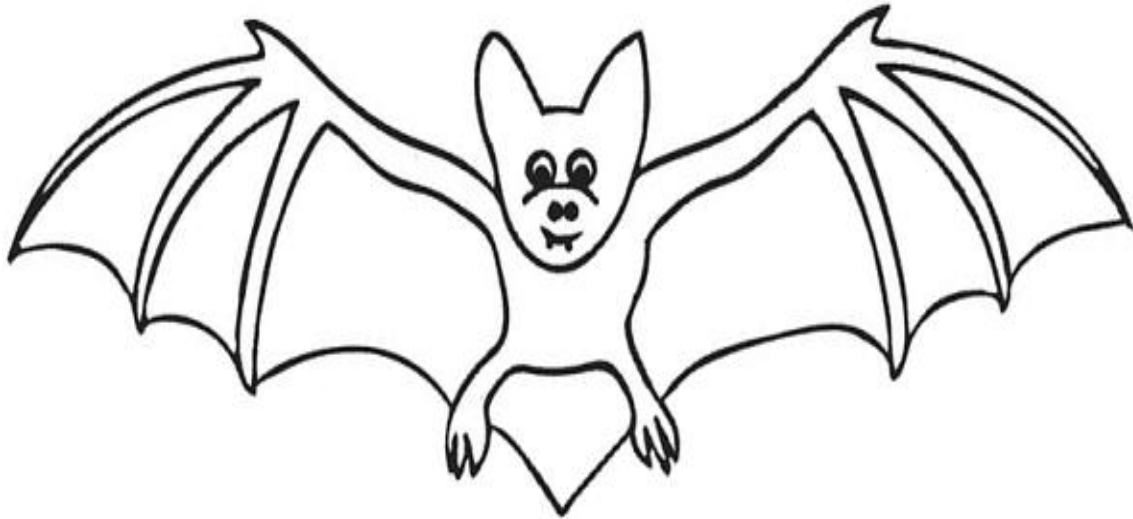


Image from www.cool2bkids.com