

Tricolored Bat  
*Perimyotis subflavus*



Tricolored Bats receive their name from the color of their fur which is dark at the base, lighter in the middle, and dark at the tips. It often appears yellowish but may, occasionally, appear brown or silver-gray. Another distinguishing factor is their pink forearms contrasting with dark wings. Young are darker/grayer than adults. Tricolored bats are the smallest bat species in the east and midwest, averaging only 1 3/4 inches in length with a 9 inch wing span. Adult males weigh about 0.26 oz before hibernating and 0.16 oz after. Females average 0.28 oz in the fall and 0.2 oz in the spring after hibernating. In North America, only

the Western Pipistrelle (*Parastrellus hesperus*), also known as the Canyon Bat, a close relative of the Tricolored bat, is smaller.

The Tricolored Bat's range extends from the southern portions of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia south through thirty-nine U.S. states into Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, and Nicaragua. It is one of the thirteen resident species of bats in Florida. Once abundant throughout its range, it is now in danger of extinction. Canada listed it as an endangered species in 2012 and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing it as endangered under the Endangered Species Act in 2022 and finalized that designation on February 28, 2025. The main threat to the Tricolored Bat is White-nose syndrome, a disease caused by the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus*, which can wipe out whole colonies. This fungus attacks the bare skin of bats while they are hibernating. It looks like a white fuzz on their face and causes the bats to become active and burn up their stored fat during a time when they are supposed to be hibernating. The fungus thrives in cold, dark places like caves. It is spread by contact, either bat to bat

or contact with surfaces, like clothing, with spores on it. In areas affected by the virus, there is a 90 -100% decline in colonies. There is no cure yet. The species hardest hit are the Northern Long Eared Bat, the Little Brown Bat, and the Tricolored Bat. Although White-nose syndrome has not yet been found in Florida, it has been estimated that Florida's Tricolored Bat population has declined by 70% since 2014. While the exact cause of the decline has not been determined, deforestation is a major threat. Increasing temperatures and more frequent and severe storms are also contributing factors. Predators include birds of prey, raccoons, snakes, skunks, prairie voles and the northern leopard frog. The Tricolored Bat hibernates during the winter in caves and mines. In southern areas where mines and caves are scarce, like Florida, they hibernate in trees and man-made structures like road culverts and under bridges. Bats faithfully return to the same hibernaculum each year. They also return to the same roosts during the non-hibernating season. Males roost singularly in clusters of dead leaves, in Spanish moss, in lichen, under dead palm fronds, in barns, beneath roof eaves, and many, many other places. Females

form maternity roosts but leave these roosts shortly after their young are weaned and spend the rest of the non hibernating season primarily roosting in the leaves, moss, and lichen of hardwood trees.

Tricolored Bats converge near their hibernaculum in the fall to mate. Females then store the sperm in their uterus during hibernation. In Florida they hibernate from mid-November until sometime in March. When they emerge in spring they ovulate and migrate to their summer roosting territory where they form maternity colonies in hardwood trees like oak, maple, cottonwood, and tulip trees. Gestation is about 44 days. Tricolored bats usually bear two pups. The pups are born with their eyes closed and no fur but they mature quickly. They begin to fly by three weeks and have mastered adult-like flight by four weeks.

Mothers leave the young alone in the roost at night to forage but they generally remain close to their roost as they forage. Tricolored Bats are insectivorous. They use echolocation to find mosquitoes, beetles, ants, moths and other insects as they fly over forest edges, ponds, and streams. Mothers leave the maternity roost soon after they have weaned their pups. The

young, called subadults, linger in the maternity roost. They are thought to reach sexual maturity their second fall. Tricolored Bats have been known to live at least 15 years in the wild.