



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program

Lasionycteris noctivagans Silver-haired Bat



Photo by R.W. Van Devender

Identification: Small to medium sized bat; back dark brown with a strong wash of silver; slightly lighter belly with less obvious silver wash; short ears equal in length and width.

Measurements and weights: Total length ranges from 95-115cm, weight ranges from 6-14 grams

Taxonomic comments: No subspecies recognized.

Status: Global rank is **G5** and state rank is **S1**.

Habitat: Old Growth forest, especially along streams and rivers.

Range: Throughout most of the continental United States, southern Canada, southeastern Alaska, northeastern Mexico, and Bermuda.

Food habits: insectivorous, primarily flies, beetles, moths; hunts in early evening or late afternoon along streams or along forest edges. Two foraging periods each night, first period is 3-4 hours after sunset and the second one is 6-8 hours after sunset. The Silver-haired bat uses tail and wing membranes as nets to catch and trap food¹.

Life expectancy: Not more than 12 years.

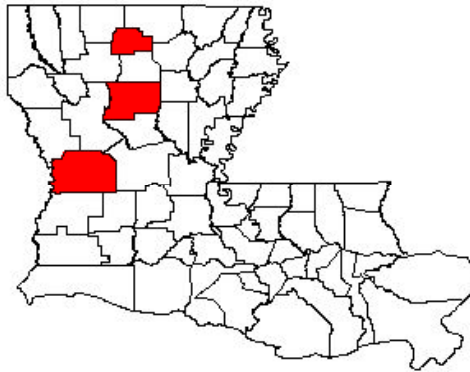
Reproduction: Individuals reach sexual maturity at 1 year of age. Mating begins at the end of September and 1-2 young are born in June or July. May reproduce in large groups of up to 12 females; young begin to forage with mothers at 3 weeks of age.

Migration behavior: During the winter (October-April/May) residents of cold climates migrate to warmer regions. Bats that reside in warmer regions (i.e., Louisiana) are typically permanent residents and do not migrate. In some places *L. noctivagans* will hibernate in caves and occasionally trees or buildings during the winter. Individuals are solitary but this species forms groups to migrate.

Reason for decline: Historically rare in Louisiana. Populations may be threatened by the destruction of old growth forest - the habitat that this species is dependent upon for breeding and roosting.

Interesting facts: Although most bats typically roost head-down, pregnant females of *Lasionycteris noctivagans* roost head-up. By adopting this sleeping posture the tail membrane can be used as a basket to catch her newborn babies¹.

Known distribution in Louisiana:



Dates of documented observations are: 1958, 1974, and 1997

References

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