

A Basic Guide To

Identifying Bats Found In Kentucky Caves During The Winter



Document compiled by:

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<http://www.kdfwr.state.ky.us/>

(A) ears very long (to about 1-1/2 inches) and usually arched back against body (in hibernation) or extended (when awake); found hanging singly or in groups or clusters...

- (1) upperparts grayish brown; underparts white - **Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat**
(Jackson and Rockcastle County Caves – singles mostly though some clusters)



- (2) upperparts pale to dark brown; underparts light brown – **Virginia Big-eared Bat**
(Fairly rare in Jackson and Rockcastle County Caves; usually singles)



Rafinesque's big-eared bat



Virginia big-eared bat

(AA) ears “normal” . . . go to (B)

(B) hanging singly . . . go to 3-6

- 3) fur silver-tipped on back; fur elsewhere on body very dark except bases of ears which are reddish; often found wedged deeply into crevices in cold zones near cave entrances – **Silver-haired Bat** (Found in Jackson and Rockcastle County Caves; uncommon bat in winter; hard to find in wedged in crevices.)



- 4) fur light brown, reddish brown, or “blonde” (or bat may be covered with fine water droplets and appear white all over); forearm reddish; usually found in the open in the warmer portions of caves – **Eastern Pipistrelle** (Common throughout state)



- 5) brown or reddish-brown, large, muzzle naked; often hiding partly in crevices in cold areas near entrances; tending to pen mouth wide, exposing a large set of sharp teeth (used to eat beetles), and to screech loudly when blown upon or touched – **Big Brown Bat**
(Commonly found throughout state though not plentiful.)



- 6) smaller; dark brown; longer and more pointed tragus (projection from ear) than other species; tending to hide singly in the back of a cranny or crevice and to chatter noisily when disturbed – **Northern Bat**



(BB) hanging in groups, rows, or clusters . . . go to (C)

(C) in loose clusters or rows, sparse enough that at least some of cave wall or ceiling can be seen easily from below when you look into the group; these bats have dark noses...(7 & 8)

- 7) in loose clusters or rows in very humid, warm or moderately-warm caves, usually hanging straight down, with wings parallel to the body, from ceilings, domes, or from wall crevices – **Little Brown Bat**



8) in loose groups in cool or cold sections of caves, usually sprawled against the walls or ceilings with wings angled away from the body – **Gray Bat** (Does not hibernate or summer in Jackson and Rockcastle County Caves)



(CC) in very tight clusters, so tight (150-450 per square foot) that each bat is touching its neighbors and the cave ceiling cannot be seen from below when you look into the cluster; these bats have pink or pinkish-gray noses and grayish upper bodies; occur only in cool or cold sections of caves . . . go to 9 & 10

9) found statewide, but mainly east and north of Mammoth Cave National Park; belly color grayish or tannish (but not white!) – **Indiana Bat**



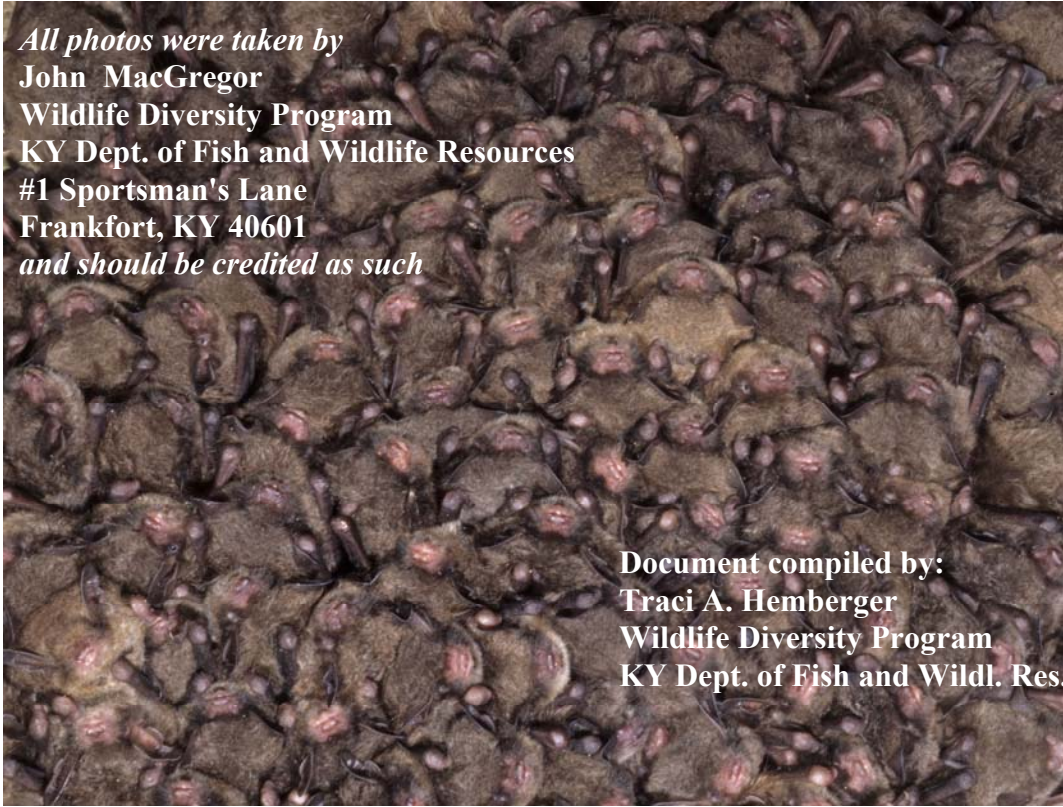


- 10) found from Mammoth Cave National Park westward; belly color distinctly white – **Southeastern Bat** (therefore not found in Jackson & Rockcastle Caves)



[Note, the eastern small-footed bat, the smallest KY bat, is not covered in this key. It is rarely found in Jackson and Rockcastle County Caves in winter.]

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