

# Long-Tailed Bat

Pekapeka (*Chalinolobus tuberculatus*)



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## Auckland's bats – are they in your backyard?

Auckland is one of the only cities in New Zealand that still has resident populations of long-tailed bats. To date long-tailed bats have been recorded in the Waitākere and Hunua Ranges, Riverhead, Pakiri and Swanson. Their numbers are declining due to predators and the removal of trees where bats roost. In Auckland, the short-tailed bat only remains on Little Barrier Island. Long-tailed and short-tailed bats are found only in New Zealand and are our only native land mammals.

## Did you know?

- Long-tailed bats are capable of long distance flight – up to 50km in a single night, as they move between feeding and roosting sites.
- The high frequency sounds emitted by bats cannot be heard by humans. Bat detectors convert bat pulses into sounds humans can hear, which can be used to monitor bat presence.
- There are several confirmed bat recordings around the edges of Auckland city, but it is possible they are widely distributed throughout the city and surrounds.



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▶ **Contact the biodiversity team** at Auckland Council to report bat sightings, borrow a bat detector or to get assistance with potential bat habitats.

**Find out more:** phone 09 301 0101, email [biodiversity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:biodiversity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz) or visit [www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)



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### Key bat facts:

- weigh 8-14g and have a wing-span of about 250mm – about the hand span of an adult man
- dark brown to black fur on torso, while the wings are virtually hairless
- feed on flying insects e.g. moths, beetles, mayflies, midges and mosquitoes
- use echolocation to identify food and other objects while flying
- preyed upon by the native ruru (morepork), feral cats, stoats, possums and rats.

### Where do they live?

- Long-tailed bats usually find roosts in large, old canopy trees (e.g. rimu, puriri, totara, pukatea), either beneath the bark or in cavities. Bats can also find suitable roosts in mature exotic trees such as pine, gum and macrocarpa.
- They have more than one roost which they frequently switch between (e.g. day and night roosts).

### Bat behaviour

- Bats fly at night, so are rarely seen. Due to their size and flight pattern, they can be mistaken for fantails or swallows.
- Bats are social animals with colonies of 10-50 bats roosting and feeding together. There may be separate male and female colonies during the breeding season.
- Breeding females give birth to only one pup per year. Juveniles are carried during feeding flights by the mother until they reach adolescence at around 4-6 weeks.

### Bat detection

- Bats can sometimes be seen moving against a clear twilight sky just after dusk.
- You are more likely to detect bats in warmer temperatures during spring and summer, when bats increase their feeding activity throughout the night.
- Bats are less active in winter, and can even enter a torpid (semi-hibernation) state during colder months.



Bat detector

## What is Auckland Council doing to help bats?

### Learn about bats

Many Aucklanders do not know New Zealand has bats, let alone that they could be in their backyard. Auckland Council is working with partners, communities, schools and interest groups to help people understand more about long-tailed bats and how they can be protected.

### Where do bats live?

Bat recording boxes are left out to record echolocation sounds. They will record bat presence within 80m, but not how many there are.

### Researching bat habitats

Auckland Council is researching areas where bats have been detected to find out more about their populations. On forestry land we are working with industry and research organisations to understand how land-use and bats can persist in the same habitat. We are also investigating how roost boxes can be used to house and monitor long-tailed bats in urban areas.



## What can you do to help bats?

### Become a bat-spotter

When you tell us about a bat sighting, you are helping to build our knowledge about bats and their habitats. If you think you may have long-tailed bats on your property, a hand-held bat detector can be borrowed from Auckland Council to help you search.

### Look after bat habitats on your property

Protecting old or standing dead trees with cavities or loose bark can help save the natural homes of long-tailed bats. Please consider bats before felling a tree, especially near bat habitat areas such as forest edges and near waterways. You could also consider planting large trees for future bat generations.