



# LONG-TAILED BATS PEKAPEKA-TOU-ROA

## Restoring Habitats for Endangered Species

### What are they?

Long-tailed bats are one of only two native land mammals in New Zealand. These small (8-14g), dark brown to black bats are perfectly adapted to New Zealand conditions, using echolocation to hunt flying insects at night.

#### Physical Description:

- Small wingspan of about 25cm
- Dark brown to black fur
- Virtually hairless wing membranes
- Feed on moths, beetles, mayflies, midges, and mosquitoes
- Rest by day in tree cavities, feed by night

### Why are they special?

- Found only in Aotearoa New Zealand - they are nowhere else in the world
- Threatened species status and numbers continue to decline
- Their presence shows healthy forest habitats
- Each bat eats thousands of insects nightly
- They can fly long distances between forest fragments

### Behaviour and Habitat

- Roost in cavities in old or dead trees, including cabbage trees, old-age willow and poplar forests around ponds where bats feed.
- Bats like to feed on aquatic insects over water.
- Ponds sheltered by overhanging trees help bats to feed in poor weather.
- Social animals - often roost in groups of 10-50
- Frequently switch roost sites
- Large home ranges - may travel between forest fragments
- Breeding females have one pup per year

Cabbage Tree |  
Ti Kouka



Long-tailed bat taking  
shelter



Photo: DOC - Colin O'Donnell



# HOW TO PROTECT BATS

## Habitat Protection

1. **Protect roosting trees** - Especially old trees with hollows and dead standing trees.
2. **Before tree removal** - Contact DOC or council to check for bats
3. **Plant bat-friendly trees** - Pūriri, tōtara, pukatea with rough bark

## Pest and Predator Control

1. **Target rats and stoats** - Primary predators of bats
2. **Control possums** - Compete for roost sites
3. **Cat management** - Keep domestic cats indoors at night and target feral cats with predator control
4. **Remove climbing weeds** - Moth plant, ivy and asparagus can suffocate roost trees

## Farm-Friendly Actions

- **Install bat boxes** - Place 4-6 metres high in trees
- **Minimise night lighting** - Near known bat habitat
- **Reduce pesticide use** - Especially in areas with bat activity
- **Connect forest patches** - Plant corridors for bat movement

## What to Include in Your Farm Plan

- ✓ Identify potential bat habitat areas
- ✓ Record any bat sightings or signs
- ✓ Plan protection measures for roosting trees
- ✓ Schedule pest control activities
- ✓ Set goals for habitat enhancement
- ✓ Include monitoring activities (bat detectors are available - contact us)

### Baby Long-tailed Bats

A baby long-tailed bat, or pup, is born tiny and flightless.

Each year, mothers typically raise just one pup in tree cavities, making populations slow to grow and vulnerable to predators like rats and stoats.



Photo: DOC - Sabine Berner

## RESOURCES + SUPPORT

- Department of Conservation (DOC)
- Waikato Regional Council biodiversity team
- NZ Bat Research Programme
- Local Landcare groups



[piakowaihourestoration.org/resources](https://piakowaihourestoration.org/resources)

