

### **The Camper's Best Friend**

Sometimes a camping trip is spoiled by just too many biting insects—ants, flies, mosquitoes, and wasps. And yet that camping trip would be even worse if the western pipistrelle wasn't on the job. This tiny bat, smallest in the U.S., can eat up to 20 percent of its body weight in one night. That would be like a 100 pound person eating 80 hamburgers. And the bat is eating insects, many of them the stinging and biting kind.

This bat is easy to see, for it comes out before dark. In the afternoon or early evening it leaves its roosting site—often a crack in a cliff wall—and flies quite close to the ground. Its fluttery wings and quick changes of direction help distinguish this tiny mammal from the swooping flight of swallows and other insect-eating birds.

Since bats are mammals, they are warm blooded, and they have fur. They definitely do not have feathers! The soft skin of their wings is supported by long thin bones, which are actually the bat's fingers. Bats have thumbs, too, and use them to hang on to their roosting place.

For more information:

<http://www.batcon.org>

<http://www.nsr1.ttu.edu/tmot1/pipihesp.htm>

*Pauly the Adventurous Pallid Bat*

by Heather Irbinskas

ISBN 1-58369-032-8

32 pages, 10 x 10, \$7.95

Chris Anderson  
12880 N. Vistoso Village Dr.  
Tucson, AZ 85737  
Phone (520) 622-1999  
Fax (520) 623-9519  
Chris@wnpa.org