

# Meet the 'Ōpe'ape'a

Only one land mammal has been able to reach Hawai'i without the help of people and their ancestors likely got tossed here on storms. They changed over time and became an endemic species, found nowhere else on earth. The 'ōpe'ape'a have brown to grayish fur with white tips, giving them the English name of Hawaiian hoary bat (*Aeorestes semotus*).

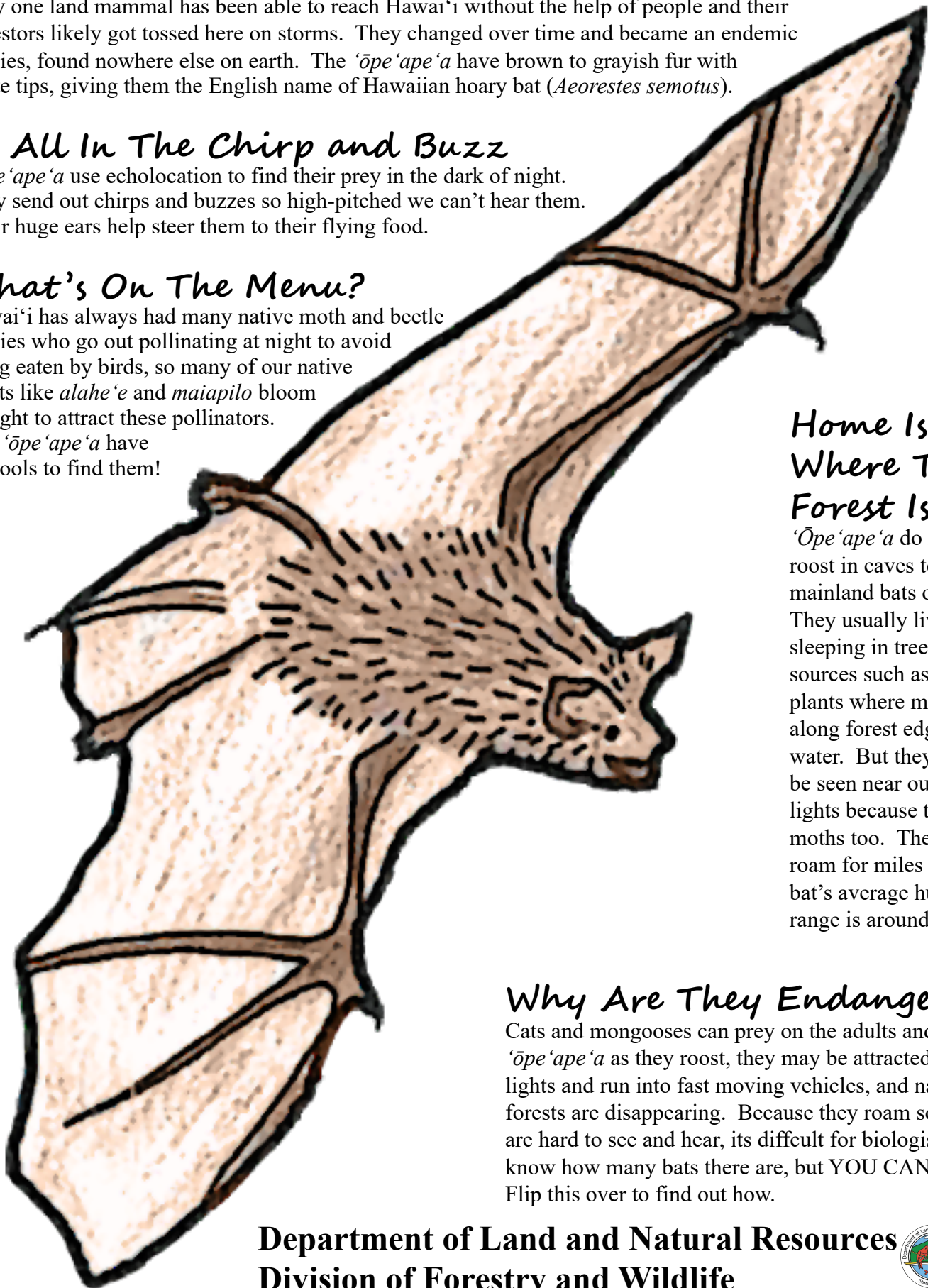
## Its All In The Chirp and Buzz

'Ōpe'ape'a use echolocation to find their prey in the dark of night. They send out chirps and buzzes so high-pitched we can't hear them. Their huge ears help steer them to their flying food.

## What's On The Menu?

Hawai'i has always had many native moth and beetle species who go out pollinating at night to avoid being eaten by birds, so many of our native plants like *alahe'e* and *maiapilo* bloom at night to attract these pollinators.

The 'ōpe'ape'a have the tools to find them!



## Home Is Where The Forest Is

'Ōpe'ape'a do not rest or roost in caves together as mainland bats often do. They usually live alone, sleeping in trees near food sources such as blooming plants where moths gather, along forest edges and water. But they can also be seen near our street lights because these attract moths too. They may roam for miles and one bat's average hunting range is around 60 acres!

## Why Are They Endangered?

Cats and mongooses can prey on the adults and baby 'ōpe'ape'a as they roost, they may be attracted to bright lights and run into fast moving vehicles, and native forests are disappearing. Because they roam so far and are hard to see and hear, its difficult for biologists to know how many bats there are, but YOU CAN HELP! Flip this over to find out how.

**Department of Land and Natural Resources**  
**Division of Forestry and Wildlife**



# Help Find Ōpe‘ape‘a

How far do they roam? Do they migrate between elevations for different seasons or do they just follow the winds the insects are being swept up into?

## Are Bats Visiting Your Neighborhood?

Ōpe‘ape‘a can be seen easiest right before or after sunset or sunrise, their favorite hunting times. Look up at nearby street lights or around freshwater streams, ponds or reservoirs and watch for that bat shape quickly swooping back and forth hunting on the wing.



## Now Join the Team!

Your Citizen Science observations can help solve bat mysteries! Go to:  
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/team-bat-hawaii>  
and tell us the location, date and time of all your bat sightings.

Learn more:

<https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dofaw/education/learn/>

## Help Ōpe‘ape‘a Survive and Thrive

- ✿ Keep your cats indoors!  
Cats and mongooses are predators we brought to the islands, and they can kill keiki bats roosting in trees.
- ✿ Plant more native plants wherever you can! Native Hawaiian plants are best at feeding our native moths and the bats also need trees to roost in.
- ✿ Avoid trimming trees over 15' during the pupping season (June 1- September 15).
- ✿ Barbed wire atop a fence can kill them! Try without!
- ✿ Make sure lights at home are low wattage and pointed down.  
Bats can be injured after flying into the sides of buildings with large windows.

## Fast Bat Facts

- ✿ The ancestors of today's Ōpe‘ape‘a probably colonized Hawai‘i about 10,000 years ago.
- ✿ Their Hawaiian name refers to a half taro leaf or a canoe sail.
- ✿ Females are a little bigger than males, wingspan is up to 12 inches.
- ✿ They roost in vegetation, usually about 3-30 feet above the ground.
- ✿ They forage many miles each night, from sea level to the mountains.
- ✿ They mate from September to December and give birth in June, often to twins.
- ✿ The mother Ōpe‘ape‘a leaves her pups on their roost tree while she forages for the insects that will make the milk her keiki need.
- ✿ They were officially designated the Hawai‘i State Mammal in 2015.
- ✿ Ōpe‘ape‘a are protected under federal and state endangered species laws.

