

**California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System**  
**California Department of Fish and Wildlife**  
**California Interagency Wildlife Task Group**

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BIG FREE-TAILED BAT

*Nyctinomops macrotis*

Family: MOLOSSIDAE  
M041

Order: CHIROPTERA

Class: MAMMALIA

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#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

The big free-tailed bat is rare in California. Records of the species are from urban areas of San Diego Co., and vagrants found in fall and winter. A probable vagrant was collected in Alameda Co., but this record is suspect. Big free-tailed bats in other areas prefer rugged, rocky terrain. Found to 2500 m (8000 ft) in New Mexico, southern Arizona, and Texas. Probably a yearlong resident.

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Feeds principally on large moths. Takes a variety of other flying insects as well. Often caught foraging over water sources.

**Cover:** Roosts in buildings, caves, and occasionally in holes in trees (Parish and Jones 1999). Also roosts in crevices in high cliffs or rock outcrops.

**Reproduction:** Probably does not breed in California. In other areas, small nursery colonies are formed in rocky crevices in high cliffs.

**Water:** No data found.

**Pattern:** Prefers rugged, rocky canyons.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** Nocturnal. Emerges late in the evening.

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Probably a yearlong resident. Many individuals wander widely in autumn, resulting in records far out of the normal range.

**Home Range:** No data found.

**Territory:** May be found in small groups.

**Reproduction:** Young are born in June and July; births peak in late June. A single young is born annually. The young are capable of flight in August to mid-September.

**Niche:** A moth strategist and rapid flier.

**Comments:** Rare in California. A California Species of Special Concern (Williams 1986).

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Life history accounts for species in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System were originally published in: Zeiner, D.C., W.F.Laudenslayer, Jr., K.E. Mayer, and M. White, eds. 1988-1990. *California's Wildlife*. Vol. I-III. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. Updates are noted in accounts that have been added or edited since original publication.