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Cooperation:

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Vampire Bat

Creepy? Cool? Whatever you think of bats, they are a vital part of ecosystems. And, they're the only mammals that can truly fly!

They can be tiny (the bumblebee bat weighs less than a penny) or super-sized (fruit bats known as flying foxes have a wingspan of six feet). Of 1300 species around the world, only three are vampire bats.

It's true that vampire bats drink blood. The common vampire bat lives in the tropics of Mexico, Central America and South America. It has the distinction of being the only mammal who survives entirely on blood. Babies drink their mother's milk for the first three months, though, and cling to her for another six.

At night, these stealthy creatures leave their roosts in caves or hollow trees and travel to find dinner, perhaps to a herd of cattle. Vampire bats take a little bite of their host animal and drink up, consuming up to an ounce of blood for its meal - a lot for an animal which only weighs an ounce or two itself, and with only a seven-inch wingspan!

These bats have rich social lives. Colonies can include 100 members or 1,000 or more. Individuals share body warmth and huddle together to keep warm (hanging upside-down, to make take-off easier). Females often share a meal with a fellow bat that might have missed out on dinner -it's regurgitated, but it's appreciated! A bat couldn't survive more than a couple of nights without food.

Common vampire bats share warmth and food with their friends.