



Photo credit: Guido Bonetti

**Scientific Name:**

*Myotis punicus*

**English:**

Maghrebian  
Mouse-eared Bat

**Maltese:**

*farfett il-lejl widnet  
il-ġurdien*

The Maghrebian Mouse-eared Bat has a wingspan of 30-40 cm, making it one of the largest bat species to occur in Malta. It is native, and although it is a cave-dwelling bat, it has also been observed roosting in World War II shelters, catacombs and other human dwellings. The ears are lance-shaped and considerably large, helping the bat orient itself in darkness. The body is covered with fluffy fur, and its back is light brown, whilst its belly is white. It forages for insects over areas with little or no vegetation, and is capable of flight with the help of a thin elastic membrane, which form its wings.

Bats are exceptionally vulnerable to extinction due to their low reproduction rate, with the female normally bearing only one offspring per year. Unfortunately, they also face a number of threats, including human disturbance, vandal acts in roosting sites and nurseries, and eviction from buildings.

This species has an unfavourable conservation status, and a number of Natura 2000 sites have been designated in order to afford protection to the important habitats of bats. Furthermore, bats have been protected under Maltese Law since 1993, such that it is illegal to disturb, capture, kill, keep, sell or trade such unique flying mammals.