

Phyllonycteris poeyi

(Cuban flower bat)

Distribution: This species is endemic to Cuba, though certain authors consider *Phyllonycteris obtusa* of Española to be a subspecies of *P. poeyi*. It is widely distributed on the Cuban archipelago and is also found on Isla Juventud. Skull remnants have been found in the keys in the north, possibly a by-product of predation by the barn owl (*Tyto alba*). This species has been captured in evergreen, scrub, pine and hummock forests.

Roost: This species roosts solely within caves. They typically locate themselves in the section of the cave with the deepest chamber, usually with only one entrance access. These are called “hot caves” because of their high temperatures and humidity readings. The microclimate of those caves are vastly influenced by the high concentrations of this bat. This species tends to roost in colonies of up to several thousand individuals.



Physical description: This is a medium-sized bat weighing in at 17-25 g., with a forearm length of 44-51 mm. This species is very similar to *Erophylla sezekorni*. The ears are smaller, and the nose leaf is absent or rudimentary. The tibia is longer than *E. sezekorni*, and there is no calcar present. The fur in adults are a pale yellow/ tan colour, while in juveniles the fur is similar to *E. sezekorni*.

Diet: This species visits various types of plants from: the mahoe (*Talipariti elatum*), royal palm (*Roystonea regia*), the african tulip tree (*Spathodea campanulata*), sicklebush (*Dichrostachys cinerea*), as well as various native legumes, cacti and agave. They also eat various fruits from secondary growth forests which include the calabur (*Muntingia calabura*), (*Conostegia xalapensis*), spiked pepper (*Piper aduncum*), cecropia (*Cecropia schreberiana*) and pendejera (*Solanum umbellatum*).



Cryptic species *Phyllonycteris poeyi* (left) and *Erophylla sezekorni* (right). Photo by Melissa Donnelly