

Ametrida centurio (Little White-shouldered Bat)

Family: Phyllostomidae (Leaf-nosed Bats)

Order: Chiroptera (Bats)

Class: Mammalia (Mammals)



Fig. 1. Little white-shouldered bat, *Ametrida centurio*.

[<http://www.funzine.hu/2015-10-real-life-gremlins-some-of-the-creepiest-animals-on-earth/#>, downloaded 28 February 2016]

TRAITS. *Ametrida centurio* or little white-shouldered bats are small, with sizes of the males ranging from 35-46mm and females from 30-53mm. Sexual size dimorphism is shown since males are on average 17% smaller than females, a large difference compared to other bats. This bat has features such as a short broad rostrum (nose) and a wide mouth where the lips are fringed inside with papillae (growths). The noseleaf looks as though it is flattened into the face (Wikipedia, 2016). The eyes have yellow irises and are large and bulging. The males have a swollen pad underneath each eye. The ears are triangular, brown with broad yellow bases. The fur of *Ametrida centurio* is pale brown underneath, however individual hairs are tricoloured; brown at the tip, grey in the middle, with a brown base. The males are darker than the females. One of the main features of the little white-shouldered bat are the pure white spots on the shoulders (Fig. 1). This bat does not have an external tail (Lee and Dominguez, 2000).

DISTRIBUTION. The little white-shouldered bat is found in South America. They are native to Brazil, Columbia, Curacao, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela (Fig. 2). There are some sightings of them from Bonaire Island. The little white-shouldered bat occurs from lowlands to 2100m, however in Venezuela they are only seen below 1500m. There are no known fossil specimens of *A. centurio* (Reid et al., 2008).

HABITAT AND ACTIVITY. *Ametrida centurio* mostly occurs in multi-strata lowland evergreen, deciduous forest and swamps. They are also found in moist tropical forest and close to streams. The little white-shouldered bat is nocturnal in activity (EoL, 2016).

FOOD AND FEEDING. The food habits are not well known but *A. centurio* seem to be mainly fruit eaters and can sometimes consume insects, suggested by their facial structure ie, skull and dental structure. When necessary they are able to feed on nectar. They search for food from the floor of the forest to the top of the canopies (Burns et al., 2014).

POPULATION ECOLOGY. The occurrence of *Ametrida centurio* within its range is rare and uncommon. Its habitat is mainly in moist lowlands, with secondary growth or close to swamps or clearings. Some of these bats were taken from the Kanuku Mountains Guyana, a savanna with a remote forest mountain in the centre (Lee and Dominguez, 2000). They have problems with thermoregulation since they are small in size and this is one of the reasons they are limited to the lowland tropics. The increasing use of canopy nets has improved the collection of these rare bats. This type of bat is small and for its size it is generally long lived, the lifespan is approximately 7 years (Burns et al., 2014).

REPRODUCTION. At this time not much is known with respect to reproduction, but in Trinidad some females containing a single embryo were obtained around the period of July-August. This possibly means that only one pup (young bat) is born at a time (Sullivan, 2001).

BEHAVIOUR. The little white-shouldered bat is rare and under-studied, due to this little is known about its behaviour. Generally, this family of bats have a low wing aspect ratio together with a high wing load, which allows hovering to feed on insects and fruits. Communication may be tactile and chemical (Burns et al., 2014).

APPLIED ECOLOGY. *Ametrida centurio* has been listed by the IUCN as least concern because it is not decreasing at a rate necessary for it to be listed as threatened. In the little white-shouldered bat's range there are no major threats to it (Reid et al., 2008). This bat is not well understood since it is rare throughout its range. This bat however is beneficial to humans since it sometimes pollinates flowers of fruit trees, and may reduce insect pest populations (Burns et al., 2014).

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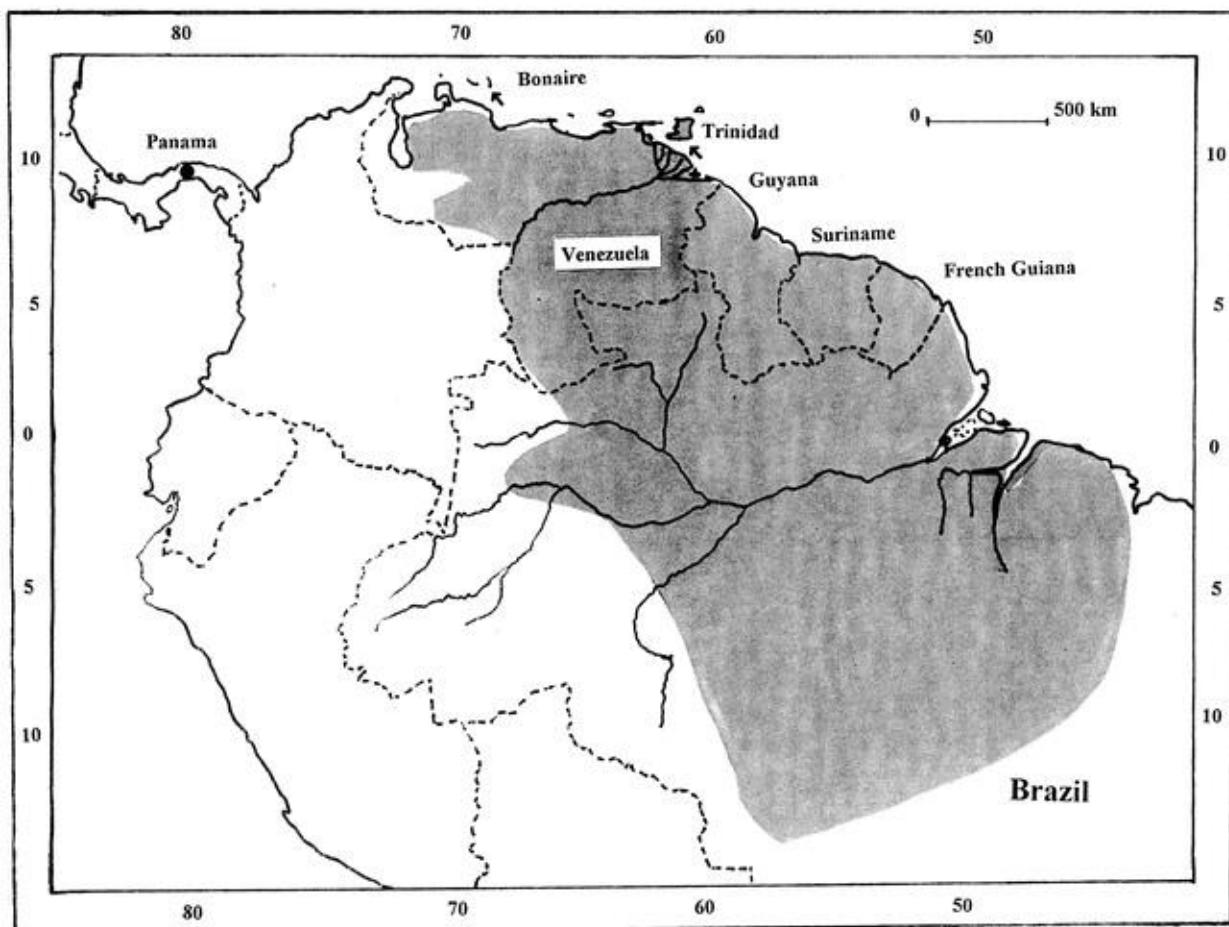


Fig. 2. Little white-shouldered bat geographic distribution.

[<http://www.bioone.org/action/showFullPopup?doi=10.1644%2F1545-1410%282000%29640%3C0001%3AAC%3E2.0.CO%3B2&id=i1545-1410-640-1-1-f03>, downloaded 7 March 2016]