

Western Bat Working Group

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Species Accounts

Developed For the 1998 Reno Biennial Meeting

Updated at the 2005 Portland Biennial Meeting

Nyctinomops femorosaccus

POCKETED FREE-TAILED BAT

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I. DISTRIBUTION: *Nyctinomops femorosaccus*, a member of the Family Molossidae, occurs in western North America, from southern California, central Arizona, southern New Mexico and western Texas, south into Mexico including Baja California. The species is thought to be non-migratory. The known altitudinal distribution is from near sea level to about 7,300 ft (2,250 meters). Breeding populations have recently been identified in southern California.

II. STATUS: Global Rank - G4. State Ranks: Arizona - S2/S3, California - S2/S3, New Mexico - S1, and Texas - S3. This species currently is not listed as Threatened or Endangered. It is a Species of Special Concern in California. There are no studies that elucidate the global population status of this species. Rankings should be re-evaluated as more information is available.

III. IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS AND LIFE HISTORY: Like all molossids (=free-tailed bats), *N. femorosaccus* has a free-tail which extends beyond the edge of the interfemoral membrane. With a forearm of 45-49 mm., it is smaller than all other North American molossid species except *Tadarida brasiliensis*. It is slightly larger than *T. brasiliensis* and, unlike *T. brasiliensis*, has its ears joined at the midline. The pocketed free-tailed bat is colonial and roosts primarily in crevices of rugged cliffs, high rocky outcrops and slopes. It has been found in a variety of plant associations, including desert shrub and pine-oak forests. The species may also roost in buildings, caves, and under roof tiles. The species forms maternity colonies, and females bear 1 young in late June or July. Lactating females have been taken between 7 July and 8 August, and volant juveniles recorded on 7 August. *N. femorosaccus* forages mainly on large moths, but its diet includes small moths and beetles, with small amounts of a variety of other insects. Owls and snakes have been documented preying on this species. Little is known about population dynamics, seasonal movements, or ecology.

IV. THREATS: No known threats to the species have been identified to date. However, some of the general threats to bats could apply to *N. femorosaccus*. These could include impacts to foraging areas from grazing, riparian management, the use of pesticides, and in some places disturbance to roost sites.

V. GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE: Information is needed on *N. femorosaccus* regarding roosting ecology, foraging ecology, seasonal movements, and breeding colony distribution. Little appears to be known about the echolocation calls of this species, and documentation is needed for comparison with other molossid species. More information on the ecology of this species is required before threats can be more fully delineated.

VI. SELECTED LITERATURE:

Kumirai, A. and J. K. Jones, Jr. 1990. *Nyctinomops femorosaccus*. American Society of Mammalogists, Mammalian Species, 349:1-5.

Schmidly, D. J. 1991. The bats of Texas. University of Texas Press, Austin. 189 pp.

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