

## Giant bat fossils have been discovered

Fossilized remains of a giant bat that once lived in New Zealand millions of years ago were discovered by a group of UNSW Sydney international scientists.

The fossil remains of a giant bat that once lived in New Zealand millions of years ago were discovered by a group of international scientists led by UNSW Sydney.

The teeth and bones of this extinct bat are about three times the size of normal bat today. Its fossils were recovered from 19 to 16 million year old sediments near the town of St Bathans in Central Otago.

This study by Australian, New Zealand, British and American scientists has been published in Scientific Reports.



This burrowing bats are only found in New Zealand, but they may also have lived in Australia. This bat is very special because it not only flies but also runs on all fours, on the floor of forest leaves, foliage, or moves along the canopy of trees, branches looking for food that are animals and plants.

With an estimated weight of 40 grams, the new fossil was found to be the largest known bat. It is also the first new bat to be added to New Zealand's fauna for over 150 years.

It was named *Vulcanops jennyworthya*, after Jenny Worthy member found the bat fossil.

However, the dense molars of *Vulcanops* and large size show that it has different diets, being able to eat more plant food than small vertebrates - a diet like some species of their relatives in South America.

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