Neil

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Sam

And I'm Sam.

Neil

For centuries the relationship humans and bats has been complex. In some cultures, bats are depicted as vampires, associated with Halloween, witches and dark, scary places. In others they are considered messengers of the .

Sam

Bats an important part in stories and myths from around the . And a large illuminated 'bat signal' shining in the night sky can mean only one thing – a call for help to the superhero, Batman!

Neil

So do we love or these furry flying mammals? And with some newspaper headlines identifying bats as the possible source of Covid-19, should we think of them as or enemy?

Sam

We'll be answering all these soon, but first, Neil, time for another interesting bat fact. Did you know that bats account for 1 in 5 of all mammal species? There's a huge variety of them, from tiny fruit-eating bats that fit into the palm of your to giant **carnivores**, or meat-eaters, with nearly two-metre wingspans.

Neil

That's right. In fact, it's the variety of bat types that might explain our complex feelings towards them. So, Sam, my quiz question is this: roughly different species of bat are there worldwide? Is it:

a) one and a half thousand?

b) two and a half thousand? or

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c) [redacted] and a half thousand?

Sam

Hmmm, I'll say b) two and a half thousand.

Neil

OK, Sam, we'll come back to that later in the programme. Maybe not [redacted] likes them, but bats do have some friends. Farmers love them for pollinating their plants…

Sam

…and medical scientists study them hoping to discover the secrets of their anti ageing and [redacted] life.

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