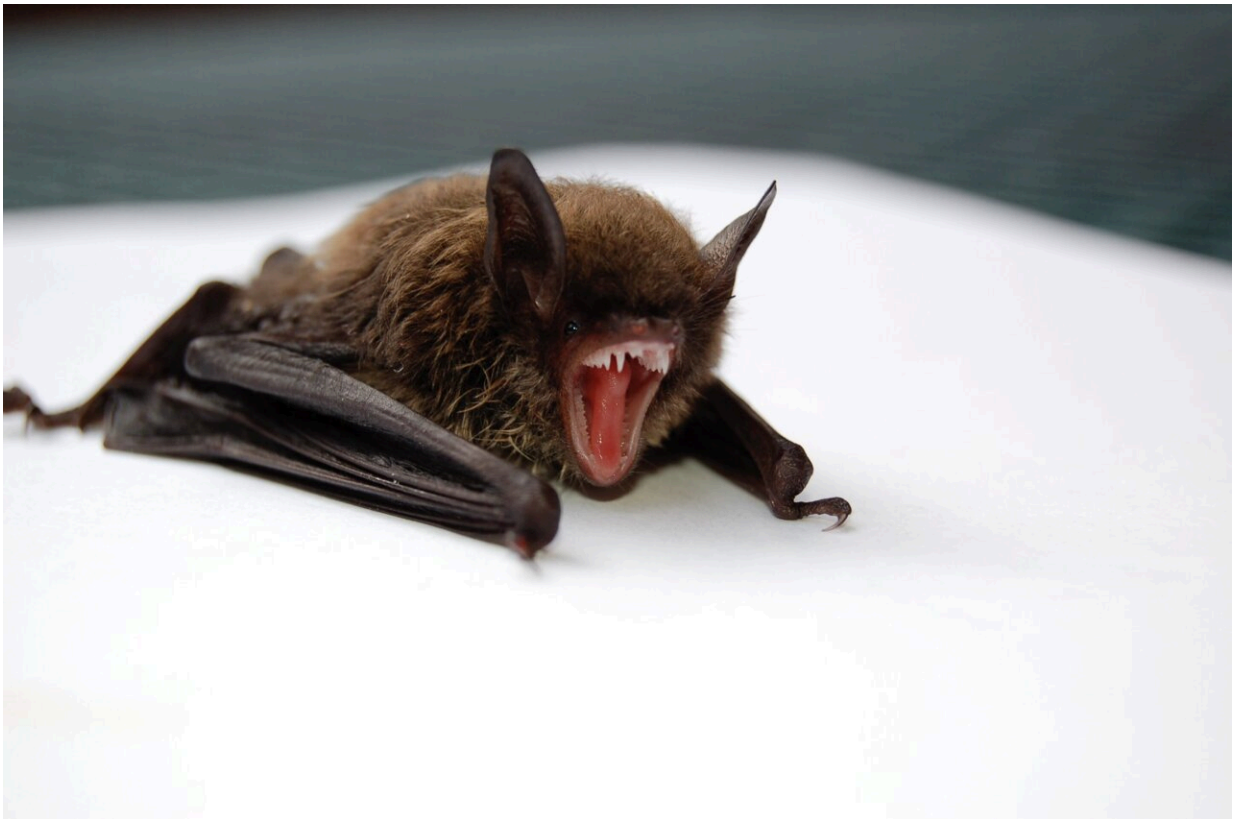


# Study finds filovirus antibodies in Australian bats

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Researchers from CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, have detected antibodies to a filovirus in Australian bats for the first time.

Detailed in a paper published today with Murdoch University, the study found antibodies in 46 samples collected between 2005 and 2017 that reacted to filoviruses.

Senior researcher on the paper, CSIRO Principal Research Scientist Dr. Glenn Marsh, said while some types of filovirus such as Ebola virus can cause severe or fatal disease in people and [non-human primates](#), these findings were not a cause for immediate concern.

"It's too early to tell if this unknown filovirus is capable of infecting humans," Dr. Glenn Marsh said.

"Filovirus infections of either human or animals have never been detected previously in Australia.

"More extensive research is needed to better understand the presence of these antibodies in bats, including wider sample collection across Australia and attempts to detect the virus."

The study tested 190 samples from microbats and megabats across Australia between 2005 to 2017, which had mostly been collected for other studies. The study found 46 samples reacted to filoviruses, with nine reacting more specifically to the Ebola and Reston viruses.

Given the nature of the reactions, scientists believe these bats were most likely exposed to a currently unknown filovirus at some stage in their lives.

Murdoch University Lecturer in Wildlife Health and Epidemiology, Dr. Bethany Jackson, said this study reinforced the importance of national collaborations for preventative [wildlife](#) health and public health activities.

"This research enabled widespread sampling of bats to create a more substantial knowledge base for future focused research," Dr. Jackson said.

Dr. Marsh said the results are not unprecedented.

"Filovirus [antibodies](#) have been found in bats overseas previously, including in some countries with no filovirus spread in the [human population](#)," Dr. Marsh said.

"Australians should continue to follow the standard safety recommendations in regards to bats and other wildlife. Don't handle bats—instead report sick or injured [bats](#) to a wildlife care organization or a vet."

Provided by Murdoch University

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