

BAT BASICS

- Bats are the only mammals that can truly fly
- BC has 17 bat species, the greatest diversity of any Canadian province
- Bats are not rodents and are protected under the *BC Wildlife Act*
- Most bat species only have one pup per year
- Bats can live to be over 39 years old
- Half of the bat species in BC are listed as vulnerable or threatened
- Since the devastating introduced fungus causing “White Nose Syndrome” was introduced to eastern North America in 2006, and estimated 6 million bats have died

BATS IN BUILDINGS

With the decline in natural roost structures, such as old trees and caves, some bat species have adapted to use buildings. There are several reasons you may want to maintain a colony of bats in a building rather than get rid of them:

- The roost site in your building may be providing critical habitat for the bats in your area
- Bats consume abundant insects such as mosquitoes, agricultural pests and forest pests
- Bats are fascinating and provide a learning opportunity, especially for children
- Most spring and summer colonies of bats are maternity colonies, used year after year by related groups of females who are preparing to give birth
- Bats are vulnerable to population decline because of their slow reproductive rate and White Nose Syndrome

Before you decide you need to get bats out of a building, first identify the problems they are creating. Some bat colonies can remain safely in a building without creating a risk for humans. Leaving bats where they are is usually the best option for bat conservation but may not be an appropriate option for the landowner.

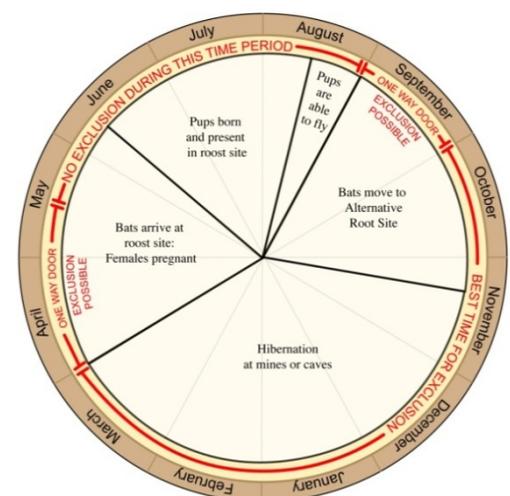
Problems of bats in buildings are often a side effect of bats (e.g. noise, smell) rather than the bats themselves. Some of these issues can be addressed by removing accumulated guano, installing a plastic barrier between bat and human living quarters to reduce smell, sealing cracks in the ceilings where guano is falling into human living spaces, replacing stained insulation, or stringing a tarp to catch falling guano (in a barn or car port).

If you would like to get the bats out of your building follow these steps for excluding bats from buildings:

- 1) During summer, identify the entry and exit points that the bats are using
- 2) Install a bat-house
- 3) Wait until fall or winter (after bats have left the building to hibernate) to seal up cracks and crevices. Remember, bats can use a space as small as 0.5 cm so it can be a difficult task.

This graph is for guidelines only. Never do exclusions from May 15 to August 30. Always check for the presence of bats before sealing the roost at any time of year. Remember, all bats are protected under the BC Wildlife Act

ONE YEAR CYCLE OF BATS



BAT HOUSES

Bat-houses provide a safe, dry place for bats to roost during the summer. A bat-house is a great way to enhance habitat for bats in your backyard and/or to assist with a bat exclusion from a building. Ideally, bat-houses should have multiple chambers (several different slats), a roughened surface in the interior (for bats to easily cling), and a landing strip (extending on the bottom of the bat-house), be large (ideally at least 24" by 24"), and be stained a dark colour.

Bat houses should be placed:

- As high as possible (at least 12')
- South, east or west facing to ensure high solar exposure (ideally bat-houses should receive at least 6 to 10 hours of sun)
- In an uncluttered location free of branches, buildings or poles in front of it
- On the side of a building or pole (trees don't seem to work as well)
- Where falling droppings will not cause a problem (i.e. not over a deck)

There is no specific way to "attract" bats to a bat-house. If the bat-house is a good design in a suitable location, then it is just a matter of waiting until a colony of bats is seeking a roost site. To determine whether bats are using the bat-house, place cardboard or plastic underneath the bat-house and look for droppings.

BAT WATCH: ANNUAL BAT COUNT

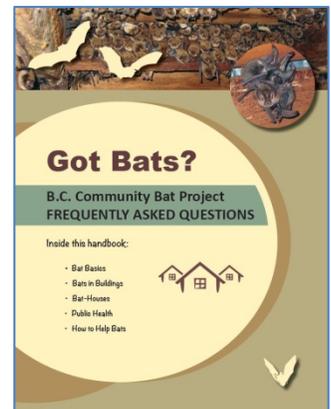
Bat Watch is a citizen science initiative in BC to monitor bat populations. This annual bat count can be done at any known roost site such as an attic, shed, bat-house, cave or mine entrance. Citizen scientists count bats as they emerge from the roost site at sunset and record the number of bats. Ideally, four counts are done each summer: two between June 1 and 21 (before pups fly) and two between July 21 and August 15 (when pups are flying). No special skills or equipment are required. Visit www.bcbats.ca to find out more.

HOW CAN I HELP BATS?

Half of the bats in BC are considered to be "of conservation concern" meaning that their populations are declining and they are considered vulnerable or threatened. There are many threats to bats including habitat loss, insecticides, wind farm development and White Nose Syndrome. Given these factors as well as the negative attitude that many people have toward bats, conservation efforts are critical.

- Install a bat-house to provide more summer roosting habitat for bats
- Make your garden "bat friendly" by planting moth-attracting plants, creating ponds and wetland areas, and maintaining old decaying trees
- Educate your friends and families about the benefits of bats and the threats they face
- Participate in Bat Watch, the citizen science annual bat count program

To find out more about bats in BC, bats in buildings, public health, and bat-houses, download "Got Bats? BC Community Bat Project Frequently Asked Questions"



For more information about bats in BC, see www.bcbats.ca