

GET INVOLVED

Bats play a vital role in our ecosystem, supporting agriculture and keeping insect population in check. Want to help? Join the Ohio Bat Roosting Monitoring Project and help scientists keep track of Ohio's maternity colonies. The project is conducted during the summer months and is a great activity for the entire family. You can get more information on this program from ODNR's website: ohiodnr.gov.

PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS

While rabies is rare in Ohio, bats and skunks are the two wild animals most likely to be carriers of the virus. Bats can be carriers of the rabies virus for a long period of time before exhibiting symptoms. Even young can be infected with the virus as it can pass from a female to her young. Because of the exposure risk, never handle a bat, adult or juvenile, without proper protection. If a bat is found in a room with children, the elderly, or a sleeping person, the bat should be captured and submitted to local or state health authorities for testing.

Histoplasmosis is an infection caused by breathing in the microscopic spores of a fungus often found in bat droppings that accumulate in large amount under bat roosts. Although healthy individuals will most likely not show symptoms, those who have a compromised immune system like children, the elderly or people who have a serious illness, are more susceptible to the infection. Contact your health provider for more information about testing and treatment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you find a wild animal and are concerned, leave it alone and call Brukner Nature Center at 937-698-6493, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.



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www.bruknernaturecenter.com

Brukner Nature Center is a non-profit, privately funded organization promoting the appreciation and understanding of wildlife conservation through preservation, education, and rehabilitation.

The purpose of our wildlife rehabilitation program is to educate people regarding the natural history of Ohio's wildlife, to offer help and advice when wildlife and people conflict, and to care for, rehabilitate, and release native Ohio wildlife expected to survive in their natural environment.

Living with **BATS**

in Miami County



Brukner Nature Center



Ohio is home to eleven different species of bats including the red bat, eastern pipistrelle, evening bat, hoary bat,

Indiana bat, little brown bat, big brown bat, eastern small-footed bat, northern-long eared myotis, Rafinesque big-eared bat, and silver-haired bat. Although the little brown bat is the most abundant species in Ohio, the big brown bat is the most commonly encountered.

Bats are the only true flying mammal. Their wings have four fingers that are connected with a leathery, skin-like membrane and their body is covered with fur. Depending on the species, bats can have a variety of fur colorations, protecting them from predators through camouflage! In fact, the red bat looks just like a fall leaf, clinging to a branch!

Bats roost in a variety of manmade and natural structures. Migratory species such as the red bat, hoary bat, and silver-haired bat will migrate when the weather is too cold to find food. The other Ohio species hibernate in groups in caves, buildings and bat houses.

Bats can be found hunting in various natural and urban habitats. Ohio's bats are insect specialists, consuming up to 1,000 insects per night, including many agricultural pests. Bats are economically important to our agriculture industry as they provide pest control and reduce the need for pesticides.

LIVING WITH BATS

Bats prefer to make their home in dark, warm and quiet locations, which can often mean bats in your attic. Bats do not, however, cause structural damage; they rely on existing openings to enter a building. An access point for a bat can be as small as ½ inch and are often located high on the building.

BAT REPRODUCTION

Most bat species give birth to a single pup in early to late May. Females will form maternity colonies during this time, consisting only of the females and their young. Offspring are left behind while the adult females are out hunting. Attics are often used for these nurseries since they can maintain the desired temperatures needed to raise young.

EXCLUSION

First, locate all the openings that are in use by bats. This can be done by checking for bats exiting your house at sunset. It is best to allow the bats to leave on their own and you can then simply deny them reentry. It is important that bats are evicted from the building only when it is known that no young are present. To protect flightless pups it is prohibited to exclude bat colonies in the months of May through August. Also, avoid exclusions when the weather is cold, as bats usually do not actively forage when temperatures are below 50°F.

PREVENTING THE PROBLEM

- Check for gaps in buildings. Seal gaps with proper building material (hardware cloth, caulk, netting or sheet metal).
- Normal maintenance on the building may also eliminate access.



WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

White-nose Syndrome (WNS) is a deadly fungal disease. It was first discovered in New York in 2007 and then found in Ohio in 2011. The fungus grows on the tissues of hibernating bats, repeatedly waking them from hibernation. Infected bats use up their stored winter fat, leading to starvation and death by spring. WNS is not dangerous to humans but can be carried on our clothing from one cave to another.

BAT HOUSES

Hang a bat house on your property today!

Bat houses provide a safe shelter to rest or a permanent home for a colony of bats.

- Bats can protect your property from harmful, biting insects.
- Having a house for bats does not mean that they will try and live in your attic.
- Bat houses can be mounted to a post, pole or a building wall.

You can purchase a bat house kit at Brukner Nature Center and support our mission of wildlife conservation.

