

Helping people and bats.

## Welcome to the Okanagan Bat-E-News

You are receiving this e-newsletter because you contacted our program asking us about bats sometime during the past two years. We have created this bat newsletter to increase awareness about bats and their importance, and to answer some common bat questions and concerns that we hear from Okanagan-Similkameen residents. You might have bats living in your building in the summer, have questions about bats in your umbrella, or maybe you want to attract these furry insect-eaters and to install a bat box. We are here to help.

We will be sending out e-news every few months with helpful tips, information, and reminders. We hope you enjoy our informational newsletters.

Sincerely,

The Okanagan Community Bat Program Team

Email: [okanaganbats@gmail.com](mailto:okanaganbats@gmail.com)

Tel. 1-855-922-BATS, ext.13

[www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca)



## Got Roof Renovations to do?



In general, bats leave building structures during winter months to hibernate in mines or caves. Usually, buildings are not occupied by bats between November and March so this is a good time to seal up your building.

Please note that [4 out of the 13 species of bats](#) in the Okanagan occasionally do use buildings as winter roosts. Use a flashlight to look into any crevices, corners, and cracks to see if bats are present. Hibernating bats can be very difficult to see since they move into small crevices. If there are bats present, contact a bat professional or call our toll free number (1-855-955-BATS) to report winter bat use and to get direction on how to proceed.

Remember that it may take several years to successfully [bat-proof a building](#). It can be difficult to locate and seal all of the tiny openings that bats may squeeze through. Bats may be very persistent in finding alternate routes into buildings once their primary routes are blocked off, so be patient.

Installing a bat house nearby will provide an alternative place for them. Be sure to install it before March 30th when they return. Wishing you all the best with your renovations.

## Install Your Bat House Before the End of March



If you're planning on installing a bat house, this is a great time of the year to do it. Bats will generally return from their winter hibernation sites in early April looking for a place to roost. The earlier you can install a bat house, the better.

Because it gets pretty hot in the Okanagan, we recommend bat boxes be placed facing East or SE to receive the morning sunshine. Don't place them facing SW or West as it gets too hot.

For more information on placement, check out the [BC Community Bat Program](#).

## Report Dead Bats to 1-855-955-BATS



**White-nose syndrome (WNS)** is a devastating fungus that is killing millions of little brown bats in eastern Canada and US. It attacks bats during hibernation and is easily spread through the cave or mine.

It is estimated that approximately 6 million bats have died. Experts predict that the common little brown bat will be extirpated from much of eastern North America by 2026.

Little Brown Bat with White Nose Syndrome. Photo by Marvin Moriarty, US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Luckily, this disease is not yet in BC, although it was reported in Washington State in March 2016.

Please call us at 1-855-955-BATS if you find any dead bats between now and May. We would like to collect them to test them for WNS.

For more information, go to [our website](#).

## Volunteers & Home-Owners Helping Okanagan Bats



Thank you to volunteer Bill Taylor who builds our bat houses.

### Thank You!

Our program runs thanks to many volunteers and home-owners who care about bats. We couldn't do it without you.

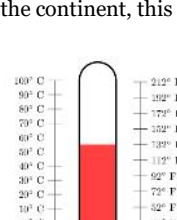
We will be recruiting volunteers who are interested in helping with bat counts this year. It involves counting bats outdoors for about an hour after sunset at a location where bats fly out for their evening forays.

Please email us at [okanaganbats@gmail.com](mailto:okanaganbats@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping.

Also, a note to those homeowners who we visited in 2016; In the near future, we will be sending out a survey via email to help us assess how we did and how we can meet your needs better. We hope you'll take the time to respond. Thank you!

## Wanted: Participants with Occupied Bat Houses To Take Part In Okanagan Bat House Temperature Study

In summer 2017, bat biologist Tanya Luszcz will initiate a volunteer study of bat house temperatures alongside others working on (or interested in) bat conservation, like BC Parks, Peachland Schoolhouse and the BC Community Bat Program. Our project purpose is to improve bat conservation in British Columbia, by determining optimal bat house designs and locations for maternity colonies in the Okanagan region. There are growing reports of significant pup mortality at bat houses during heat waves in the southern interior region of the province. Bat houses are increasingly used as a bat conservation tool, and as part of a successful exclusion from a building. Current Bat Conservation International bat house guidelines do not account for the warm summer temperatures experienced in BC's southern interior. Some bat houses in the Okanagan and other places may be too hot and may become death traps for non-flying pups. Given that bat boxes are being put up all over the continent, this could be a bat conservation crisis.



We will determine summer temperatures inside and outside of occupied bat houses across the Okanagan Valley, and we will compare rates of pup mortality at these houses to rates in long-established attic roosts. We will also submit any dead pups to the provincial wildlife health lab to determine cause of death. The data gained from this project will be analyzed and compared to other regions already collecting these data. The information we gain from this study will

help us to determine the best (and worst) factors of bat house design and placement for BC's Okanagan region. Using this information, we can improve bat conservation by providing better information to landowners and stewardship groups. This work will provide direct conservation benefit to six species of bats, including the federally endangered Little Brown Myotis.

Do you live in the South Okanagan and have a bat house that was occupied last summer? We are looking for bat houses to be part of her study. If you would like to participate, please contact bat biologist, Tanya Luszcz at [tluszcz@yahoo.com](mailto:tluszcz@yahoo.com).

**Community Bat Programs of BC**  
Email: [info@bcbats.ca](mailto:info@bcbats.ca)  
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This newsletter was prepared by Paula Rodriguez de la Vega and Margaret Holm in Penticton, BC.



Volume 1, Issue 1,

January 2017



Photo by Jennifer J.

### Newsletter Spotlight

Get your renovations done before the bats get back at the end of March!

Install your bat house as soon as possible.

Interested in volunteering to do bat counts this summer?

Report dead bats or unusual winter bat sightings to 1-855-9BC-BATS.

Okanagan Bat House Temperature Study Looking for Participants

*Please support BC Bats with a donation to our program.*

*Every dollar counts.*

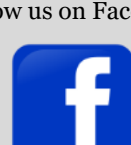


To Donate click here.

Select the BC Bats Project under the organization BC Conservation Foundation. Add a note saying you'd like it to go to the Okanagan.



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We are a network of community bat projects across BC, carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Environment. The goals of this network are to:

1) Increase the number of known roost sites in human-made structures

2) Encourage landowners to protect their bat roost sites or use bat-friendly exclusion methods and install bat-houses

3) Promote the Annual Bat Count to monitor bat populations

4) Enhance bat habitat by encouraging the installation and monitoring of bat-houses.

The success of identifying roost sites for species at risk and the enthusiasm of residents to report their bats, conserve their roost sites or consider sensitive methods for removing bats from their homes continues to drive the success of these projects. The activities in each region depend on the level of funding, community partners, and the priorities of the area.

### Special thanks to:

BC Conservation Foundation

BC Government

HSP Government of Canada



To remove your name from our mailing list, please email [okanaganbats@gmail.com](mailto:okanaganbats@gmail.com).

