

# Participate in the BC Annual Bat Count



**WHAT:** A citizen-science program in B.C. to annually monitor bat roost sites.

**WHY:** Half the bat species in BC are considered to be of conservation concern. Even the common Little Brown Myotis is now an endangered species because of high mortality rates from a disease, white-nose syndrome. White-nose syndrome is not yet in BC but is spreading in Washington State and is predicted to be here in the near future. To be able to effectively manage and conserve bats in the face of the many threats, we need to know how their population numbers are doing year to year. The BC Annual Bat Count will contribute towards gathering this important information. See a summary of the program to-date [here!](#)

**WHO:** Anyone who is interested in collecting valuable information to help monitor our bat populations.

**WHERE:** A roost site (such as abandoned houses, attic, barns, church steeples, bridges, bat-houses and other structures) on your property or somewhere else.

**WHEN:** Ideally, participants conduct four bat counts per summer - **two between June 1 and 21** (before pups can fly) and **two more between July 11 and August 5** (when pups are flying and exiting the roost). Doing all four bat counts will allow us to best compare data from year to year and between sites. If it is difficult to do four counts, consider the following options:

- Level 1: **Bat Reporter** - 1 count over the summer (between June 1 and 21)
- Level 2: **Bat Tracker** - 2 counts between June 1 – 21
- Level 3: **Bat Enthusiast** – 2 counts between June 1 – 21 and 2 counts between July 11 – August 5

## **WHAT TO BRING:**

- A current Bat Count data form (can be downloaded from: [www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca))
- Pen or pencil
- A tally counter (hand clicker or smart phone app) – or use a piece of paper to tally the number of bats
- Optional:*
  - For comfort: chair or mat to sit on, warm and insect-proof clothing, bug spray, flashlight
  - Thermometer (or find your local temperature online).
  - For fun: bat detector (e.g., EMTouch), video or thermal imaging (e.g., FLIR) camera (to help alert you to bats and enable filming/viewing).
  - Red light or flashlight – may help illuminate exits
  - Supplies to collect guano if this is the first time the site is being counted and bats species have not been identified. You will need a small paper envelope, and possibly disposable gloves or tweezers. See “DNA Collecting Protocol for Residents” at [www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca).

**\* Please return forms by September 15 \***

**For more information: [www.bcbats.ca](http://www.bcbats.ca) or 1-855-9BC-BATS**

## HOW:

- Give your site a name if it doesn't already have one (e.g. "Jenny's garage" or "Sanca Cabin"). If it has been counted before, make sure you use the same name.
- Arrive at your bat roost by sunset (see [www.sunrisesunset.com/Canada/](http://www.sunrisesunset.com/Canada/)). Bats may begin to emerge around sunset and so don't be late! Some species may emerge closer to civil twilight so don't worry if it takes a little while to see the first one.
- Count bats for one hour or until it is too dark to see, whichever comes first.
- The air temperature should be at least 12°C with low wind speed. Some bats will not fly if the weather is too cold, windy or drizzly, and roost emergence counts under non-ideal weather conditions will underestimate population size.
- Sit or stand outside so that the bats' exit point is visible from a comfortable distance. More than one person might be needed if bats are exiting from multiple points. Try to have the light sky behind the bats exit point, to make it easier to count.
- If possible, have 2 bat counters do 2 independent counts at the SAME EXIT. Our statistical support has requested this, to strengthen the results when analyzing trends. Don't tell each other your results! This will only be possible if you have enough observers, and is not essential.
- Avoid using a flashlight because some bats may avoid exiting if there is too much light. However, a red filter flashlight is an option if it significantly aids in counting without disturbing bat emergence (bats do not see well in the red light spectrum).
- Tally the bats as they fly out of their roost. You may wish to use a hand "clicker", or video the emergence to count later on your screen. Try to consider bats flying back inside and do not double-count (subtract the number returning from your total number). Don't worry if there are too many to keep track of. Just count them as they leave if that's the case. Record your observations on the data form.
- Do you have a maternity colony? Record any evidence of pups seen or heard, to confirm this. Also report any dead pups immediately – we are interested in determining cause of death.
- Mail or scan and email your data sheet at the end of the summer.
- **Do not** enter bat roosts or handle the animals.
- White-Nost Syndrome prevention: After visiting a site with bats, follow best practices for preventing spread of WNS/Pd. Knock dirt off then wash the soles of your boots with soap and hot water (>55°C), or spray the bottom of your boots with 50-70% isopropyl alcohol and let air dry. For more information see [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/wildlife-wildlife-habitat/wildlife-health/bats/bc\\_wns\\_decontamination\\_protocol\\_june\\_2023.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/wildlife-wildlife-habitat/wildlife-health/bats/bc_wns_decontamination_protocol_june_2023.pdf)
- Remember, no data (zero bats) is valuable data too! Please report if you have no bats at your site.

## **Return forms by September 15th, to your local Community Bat Program Coordinator, or send or email forms:**

BC Community Bat Program, 158 McDonald Pl., Penticton, BC, V2A 1L8. Email: [bcbats@gmail.com](mailto:bcbats@gmail.com)

## **Supported by our many regional partners and:**



This project was undertaken with the financial support of:  
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada