

Got Bats ?

A bulletin for Builders in BC

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photo: Townsend's Big-eared Bat by Jared Hobbs.

Know the bat basics

- Bats are an ecologically & economically valuable wildlife group.
- Bats are neither rodents nor considered pests under the BC Wildlife Act. They cannot be killed.
- Some bats have adapted to use buildings as an important habitat structure.
- Bats can only be evicted from a building during the appropriate season and using appropriate methods.



Assess potential bat use of the building PRIOR to construction activities

- Bats can roost under roof tiles, buckled metal, chimney flashing, wood shakes and shingles, soffits, ridge caps, vents, siding, and within walls, attics and crawl spaces.
- Bats may be roosting under the roof or accessing another part of the building structure (e.g. attic) through the roof.
- Homeowners may know they have a colony in their building. However, bats may not cause any problems for the homeowner and could go undetected.
- Look for mouse-like droppings on the roof, in the gutter, stuck to exterior walls of the building (particularly under vents and other gaps), or on the ground below obvious holes, in the attic or other crawl spaces. Bat droppings crumble when crushed whereas mouse droppings don't. Bat droppings have shiny pieces (insect exoskeletons) whereas mouse droppings have vegetation. Other signs of bat use include yellow or brown stains on the rafters, cobweb free corners, or insect remains below a potential feeding spot.
- If you are unsure, have the homeowner watch the building in good weather at dusk, ensuring that all four sides are visible. See if bats emerge. Doing these emergence counts for two consecutive evenings of good weather will provide the most confident results.

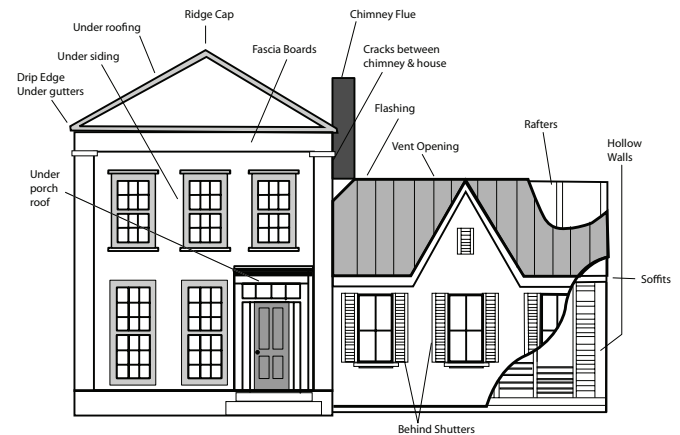
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Last Updated: October 2017

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If a bat colony is present, postpone construction activities between May and August or contact your local Community Bat Program

- Bats may form maternity colonies in buildings during summer months. Between May and August, bat pups are particularly vulnerable to disturbance, as they cannot fly. Disturbance to the roost site during summer months is considered “harassment” and is illegal under the BC Wildlife Act.
- Identifying entry and exit points of the bats will help ensure that modifications do not interrupt bat access to the roost. These holes should remain accessible during summer while bats are present (but can potentially be sealed at other times of year once bats are out of the structure). Please see calendar below for best time to exclude bats.
- Summer building activities (e.g. early May or late August) may be possible in your area if necessary: contact your region’s community bat program to learn about more specific dates.



If you have already begun construction activities and then discovered a bat colony...

- If you have exposed a colony during construction activity, re-cover the area and wait until the appropriate season to continue building activities (September to May) or contact your community bat program for more specific guidance.
- If bats have fallen out of the roost structure during construction activities, try to place them back into the crevices where they came from. Always wear gloves: never touch a bat with bare hands due to the potential risk of rabies. If someone has come into direct contact with a bat, contact your local health authority immediately for advice. See <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/rabies>.
- If placing bats back into the roof structure is not possible/safe, get a cotton pillow case or fabric shopping bag (not plastic) and pin it to a shaded wall or nearby tree with the open end up. Place bats inside so they are protected from predators but can crawl out during the evening. Do not place bats in a box, jar, or other container where they cannot get out.

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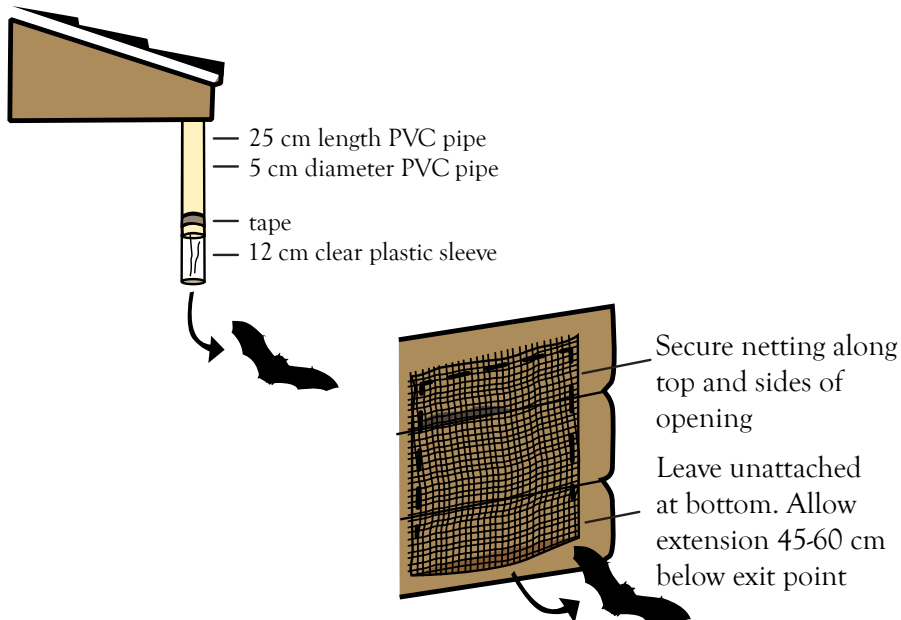


Install a bat house prior to building activities when construction will evict a bat colony

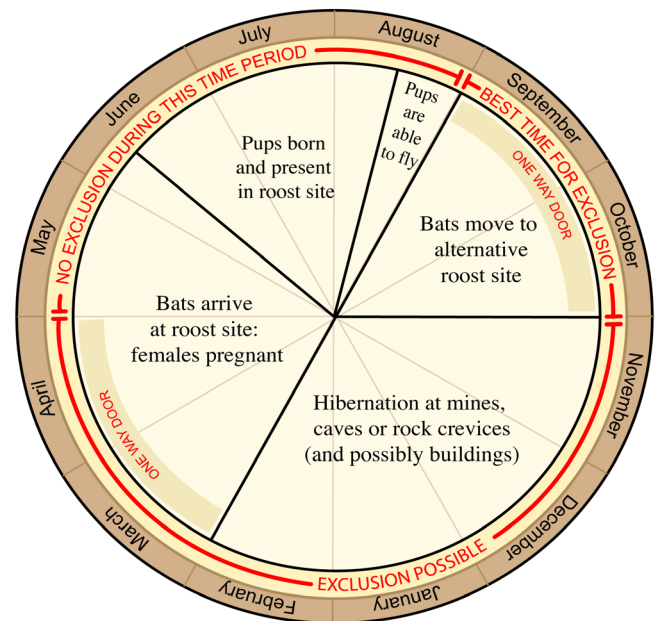
- If you know bats are present or bats are found in the building, take the time to provide alternate roosting habitat. This step increases the chances of a successful and safe eviction of bats.
- Install bat houses as high as possible (at least 12' = 3.5 m), on an appropriate facing exposure (generally south-facing but depends on region of BC) and in an uncluttered location without branches, or buildings, or poles in front or below it. See "Building Homes for Bats: A Guide for Bat Houses in BC" available at www.bcbats.ca.
- Use only large, multi-chambered designs like a four-chamber nursery box or a two-chamber rocket box (see www.bcbats.ca for booklet on bat house designs, sources and plans).

If necessary, evict bats using a one way exit device at the appropriate time of year

- Evictions and exclusions are generally not permitted during the maternity season from May 1 to September 1. Ideally, evictions should take place during the fall (September or October).
- Use a one-way exit device (such as a bat cone or flap; see sketches below) which avoids trapping bats by allowing them to exit but not re-enter.



EXCLUSION GUIDELINES FOR BATS IN BC



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Seal building to prevent bats, if desired

- Bats don't chew new holes like rodents do, but they can squeeze through small ($\frac{1}{2}$ " = 12 mm) cracks and holes
- Use screen, wood, cement, caulking, or whatever is right for your building to seal cracks and holes. Do not use spray foam when bats are present because bats can become stuck in it and die. Note that aerosol foam also breaks down if it is exposed to UV.
- While bats cannot chew through any of these sealing techniques, rodents can, so layer some steel wool between applications of silicone if these areas are accessible to rodents.
- Check the following building structures for potential gaps and seal as required:
 - Ridge cap and gable end vents should be correctly screened.
 - Gooseneck vents (e.g. drier, bathroom vents) or static roof vents in place and tightly fitted with proper mesh or flapper valve.
 - Chimney flashing buttoned tight. Ensure the following has been correctly installed. Step flashing on either side, apron flashing at bottom, back pan flashing at back (high side of chimney), followed by counter flashing around perimeter of chimney on top of these flashings, providing positive water shed, for an effective seal.
 - Soffits in place (not blown or knocked out) and fitted tightly into place. If mesh covered ventilation slots are present, check there are no holes in mesh.
 - Cedar shingles and shakes attached to plywood (rather than strapping if possible), reduces spaces bats may enter from. Felt interwoven between shakes will prevent gaps.
 - Metal roof installed directly on plywood (not on strapping). Profiled metal roof panels can be sealed with profiled neoprene foam closure strips or a Z profile perforated metal bar at the bottom edge of the ridge cap. Alternatively the roof could have a drop down ridge cap.
 - Screen chimneys at the top since sealing these at the bottom, where bats can fall in and can't get back out, can lead to high bat mortality.
- Encourage building owners to maintain building regularly. Preventative maintenance will reduce likelihood of invasions by rodents, insects and other critters.

For more information:

Regional community bat program coordinators can provide specific advice for bat houses in your region. 1-855-9BC-BATS (1-855-922-2287) www.bcbats.ca

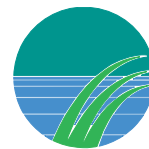


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