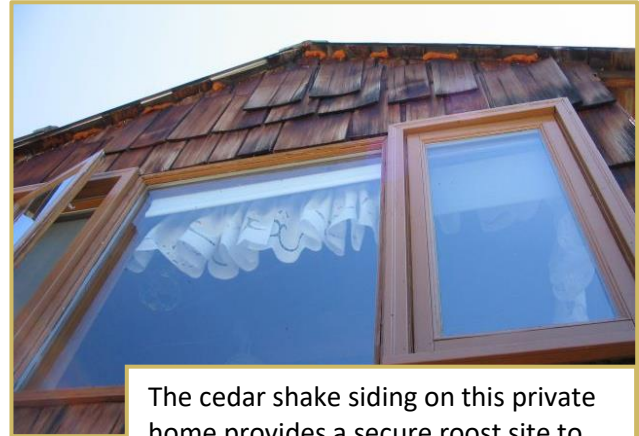


Living with Bats under Wooden Shakes

Location: Private home, Hope
Colony size: 200
Species: Little Brown Myotis, Yuma Myotis

History

This private home and B&B has had bats occupying the wooden shake siding since shortly after the house was built by the landowner, in the mid 1980s. The discovery of two dead bats prompted the landowner to contact the BC Community Bat Program in 2015.



The cedar shake siding on this private home provides a secure roost site to approximately 200 bats.

The landowner has observed the bats for years, and has noticed that the timing when they return to the roost and the apparent colony size varied annually. Sometimes bats did not appear to show up until as late as June. The landowner, who has a commercial organic garden, considers the bat colony as beneficial. Whenever possible, he takes the opportunity to educate guests at the B&B and visitors to the organic farm on the importance of bats in our ecosystem. The landowner and his guests participate in the BC Annual Bat Count.

Management actions

Guano accumulates on a balcony under the main colony location. The guano is removed annually and used as fertilizer in the organic garden. The landowner has solicited the help of his WWOOFers (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) in the annual guano maintenance effort.

"The bat colony is an excellent learning opportunity and example of a holistic way of living with nature" - Homeowner

The door to the balcony adjacent to the roosting location is sealed shut during the maternity season, to prevent disturbance to the colony and any inadvertent bat-human contact.

To provide additional roosting options, the owner has installed two bat boxes on-site.

Contributions to bat conservation and research in BC

Monitoring of the colony provides important information about regional bat ecology, including spring arrival and end of season departure dates each year.

The landowner and his guests participate in the BC Annual Bat Count. The number of bats observed at this site during the counts can vary significantly within relatively short time periods (3-5 days). This is particularly pronounced once juveniles have started to fly, and during significant changes in the weather. This variation — with the bats apparently disappearing and then returning — suggests that the colony is using one or more nearby alternate roosts. This may provide an opportunity to study roost switching behaviour.