

Don't Squish Bats Project: Quantifying Emerging Threat of Mortality to BC Bats From Exterior Awnings and Roll Down Blinds

REPORT

March 15, 2024

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Prepared for Tanya Luszcz, Environment and Climate Change Canada

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Executive Summary

An emerging threat to bat populations has been identified in southern British Columbia, specifically related to exterior roll-up blinds and power awnings commonly used for shade on homes. Bats are being inadvertently injured or killed when these blinds and awnings are rolled up or down. The Community Bat Programs of BC conducted a study to assess the prevalence of this issue and to propose solutions.

The study involved reviewing past reports to the Community Bat Programs of BC toll free line and soliciting new reports from homeowners across various regions in BC. Through press releases, social media campaigns, and direct outreach, the program compiled 106 reports, primarily from the Okanagan region. Of these reports, 97 indicated bats using the blinds or awnings, with 37% of them noting injuries or fatalities to bats. Since 2014, a total of 88 dead bats have been reported from awnings and blinds.

The majority of incidents involved bats roosting in vertical blinds (64%), followed by horizontal awnings. Most reported incidents occurred in the summer (82%), with most reports being on those that faced west/southwest/south (68%). Bats were roosting in both awnings with housing units (66%) and without housing units (34%). Some bats were roosting in gaps behind the housing units.

The study identified several actions to prevent harm to bats, including modifications to the design of the housing units, installing deterrents, and educating residents and manufacturers. These actions aim to protect bats from injury or death while maintaining the benefits of exterior blinds and awnings for homeowners.

Acknowledgements

This project was a joint effort with several regional coordinators of the Community Bat Programs of BC including Elodie Kuhnert (Kootenay coordinator), Danielle Dagenais (Metro-Vancouver Sea to Sky coordinator), Aimee Mitchell (Fraser Valley coordinator), Liliana Ortega (Thompson coordinator), and the Okanagan. It was administered by Katie Calon of BC Conservation Foundation, and primarily funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada thanks to Tanya Luszcz, as well as by Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, the Habitat Stewardship Program, and the Forest Enhancement Society of B.C.

Introduction

Exterior awnings and blinds are increasingly being used over windows and decks to reduce heat exposure to buildings. These structures are considered as a mitigation tool for homeowners and businesses to reduce the need for air conditioning. They can also help reduce bird collisions by covering up reflective windows. Unbeknownst to users, awnings and blinds may be an arising threat to bat populations. The Community Bat Programs of BC (CBPBC) has received reports that awnings and blinds are crushing bats roosting inside the casings units. To understand this threat, the CBPBC launched a survey in January 2024 to quantifying the extent, scope, and severity of this threat. The CBPBC is

concerned that these structures may be impacting the already Endangered Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*)

Little Brown Myotis, was emergency listed as Endangered on Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act (SARA) in 2014. This listing is a result of their population declines out east due to White-Nose Syndrome (WNS), a fungal disease that can severely affect bat health and survival, particularly during hibernation (COSEWIC 2013). WNS has been detected in Grand Forks, BC and is expected to spread throughout the province as seen in other regions (www.whitenosesyndrome.com). Little Brown Myotis, and other bat species populations, are impacted by several threats every year including; a loss and degradation of hibernacula, maternity roosts, and foraging areas, disturbance or harm, pollution, wind turbines, and climate change.

Bats are important wildlife and play key roles in our ecosystem. It is important to protect and conserve their populations. As such the CBPBC analysed the survey reports and quantified the extent, scope, and severity of this threat. Additionally, recommendations on how to work cooperatively with landowners and manufacturers were proposed to reduce this mortality source.

The following outlines the methodologies used to gather awning reports, outlines the data collected from the reports, and provides recommendations to mitigate the threat of exterior power awning and blinds on bat populations in BC. For the purpose of this report, the term “awning” will refer to any exterior awning, roll down blind, shade or screen used to shade a window or exterior area used by people, whether it is manual or motorized, horizontal or vertical.

Methodology

The CBPBC coordinators from the Kootenay, Okanagan, Metro-Vancouver Sea-to-Sky, Fraser Valley, and Thompson Regions worked together to strategize, collect, and compile reports. A catchy title of ‘*Don’t Squish Bats Project*’ was created to get the media and public’s attention. An online survey was developed and posted on the CBPBC website with a unique URL (<https://bcbats.ca/got-bats/dontsquishbats/>). A link to the survey was also highlighted on the homepage at www.bcbats.ca.

A press release requesting reports of bats in exterior awnings was sent out throughout BC on the week of January 23, 2024 along with social media posts on Facebook and Instagram (see Appendix 1 and 2).

Emails were sent out to Bat Ambassadors, regional partners, and volunteers to request assistance in spreading the message (see Appendix 3). We requested observations of bats using exterior awnings over the last 10 years.

Regional coordinators reviewed past reports of bats in awnings, and reached out to those contacts for more information.

The online survey was live for 6 weeks, from January 23 to March 3rd. The survey aimed to collect the following information about exterior awnings:

- a. Addresses, later changed to UTM coordinates of location of structure awning(s),

- b. Type of Awning: manufacturer, name of dealer where purchased, and type (i.e., horizontal awning, vertical roll down blind, shutters, or other),
- c. Awning parameters: aspect, size, width and length of housing gap, detailed description of mechanism, photos of locations where bats are roosting, date installed,
- d. Awning use: manual or motorized, timing of use,
- e. Bat incidences: bat injuries and/or mortalities including number of bats, dates (season), and number of bat incidences per year,
- f. General bat use of awning.

Results

The press release was picked up by at least 20 media outlets throughout southern B.C., including on Gabriola Island, Kamloops, the Kootenay and Okanagan regions. Three interviews were also aired on Rogers/Shaw TV Okanagan and iHeart Radio Penticton and Bounce Radio in the Kootenays. Three posts were made on each Facebook and Instagram. The Facebook post on January 29th, from the Got Bats? BC Community Bat Program page, received the most engagement of 150 and a reach of 3,154. An additional 7 social media posts were made by regional coordinators through their regional accounts. A total of 1,144 emails were sent by Regional Coordinators requesting observations of bats using exterior roll up blinds and awnings over the last 10 years.

Coordinators reviewed reports received through the survey, as well as past reports to the CBPBC's toll free line and email. Past reports indicated that, since 2014, the Okanagan had 40 out of 2,175 (2%) reports of bats in awnings, while the Kootenays had 4 out of 1,955 (0.2%) since 2016. In the Lower Mainland there had been only one previous report of bats in awnings.

A total of 106 reports were collected through the survey and from previous reports. Of these, 97 reports had sightings of bats, 6 reports indicated awning without any bats observed, and 3 reports were eliminated as these indicated bats using patio umbrellas. Out of the 97 reports compiled with bats, 52 were received via the new online *Don't Squish Bats* survey and via email.

The majority (85%) of the reports came from the Okanagan region, followed by the Kootenays (8%), while the Thompson Regions only had 2 reports and the Lower Mainland only one. In addition to the regions solicited, two reports came from the Omineca region indicated the reach of our efforts (Figure 1).

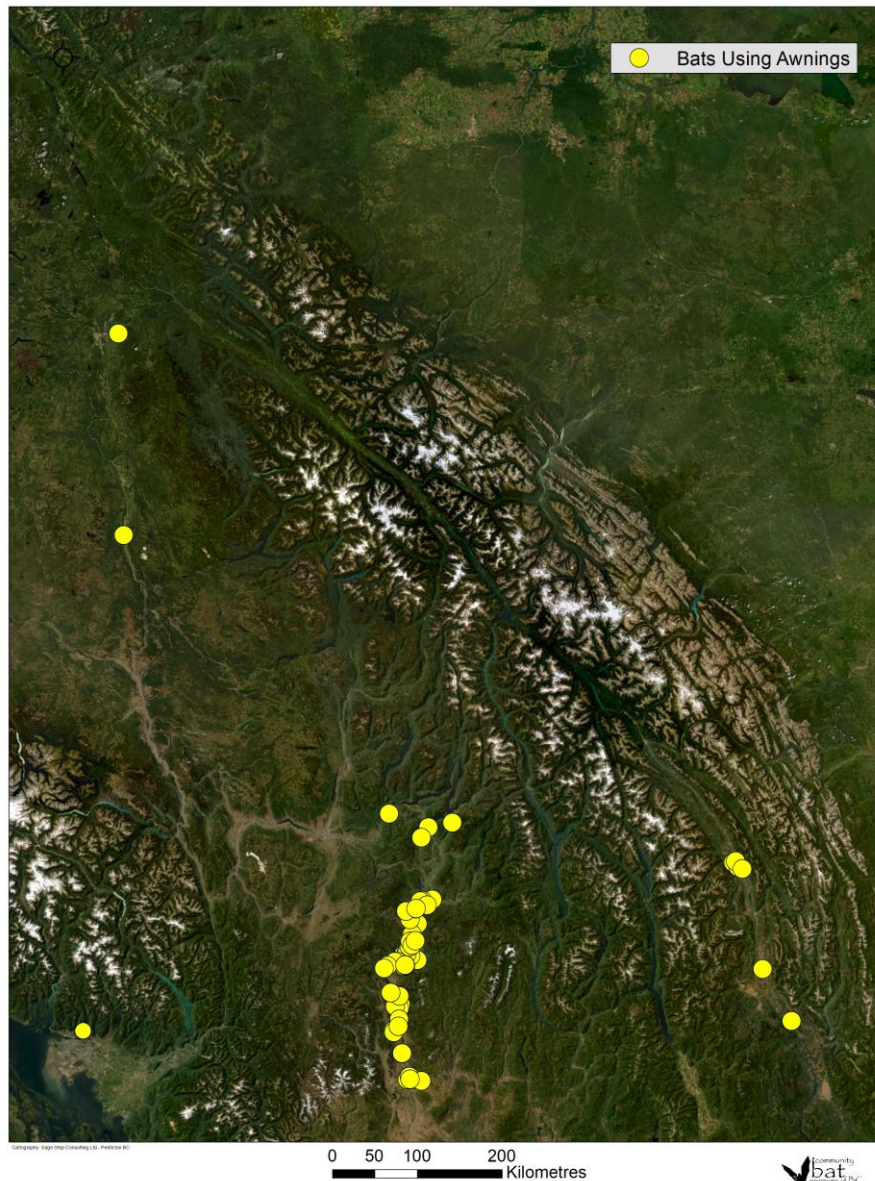


Figure 1. Satellite imagery map showing the 97 locations of reports with bats observed using exterior awnings since 2014.

Type of Awning

Only 23 of the reports accurately named a manufacturer of the awning and/or the distributor. The manufacturers identified were Talus Habitat Screens, Coolaroo, Solace Roll Screens, and Phantom Screens. Distributors ranged from Costco and Walmart to specialized awning distributors.

Out of the 97 reports with bats at awnings, the type of awning that bats were observed at was identified. Reports indicated that the majority of the reports were of bats roosting in an exterior roll down vertical blinds (64%). Bats were also reported to be using horizontal awnings (21%), permanent

shutters (9%), and other types of awnings (5%) such as a gazebo curtain, rolled down security screen, and a permanent corrugated metal awning (see Figure 2). Note that bats roosting in umbrellas were also reported but those were not included in this study. The species of bats using the awnings are unknown. Species identification is difficult from pictures and the CBPBC did not have resources to collect dead bats reported in summer.

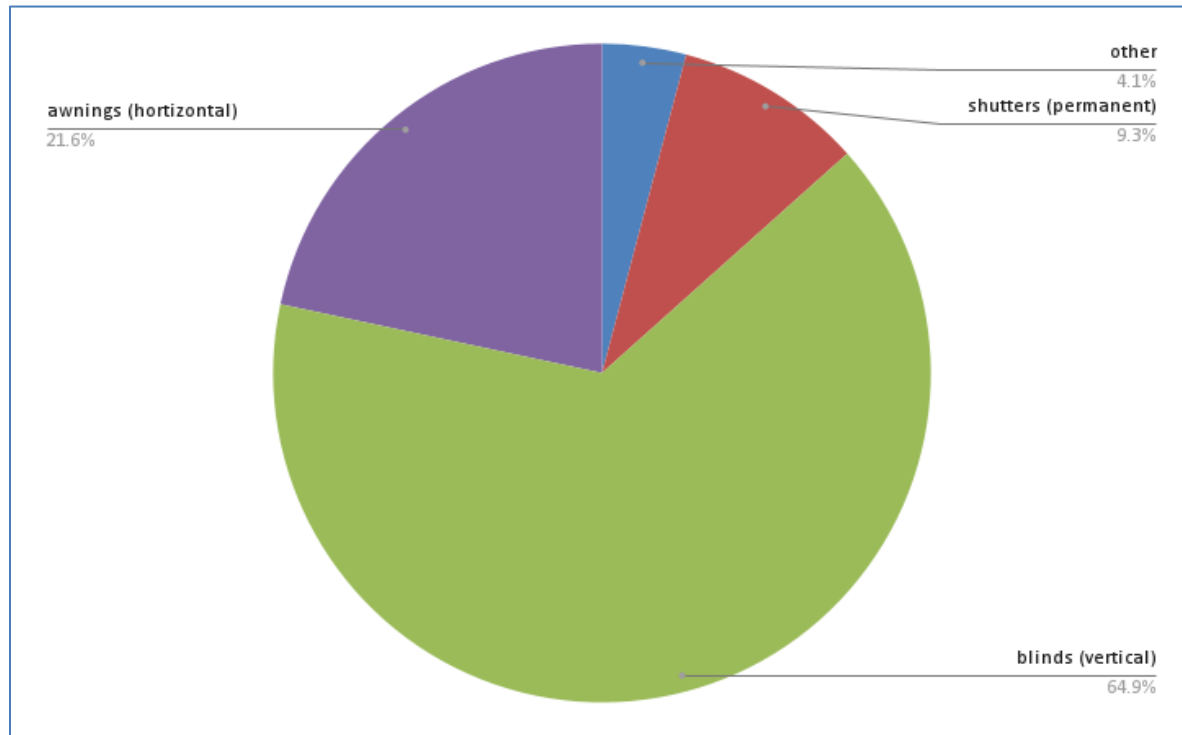


Figure 2. Pie chart showing the type of awning reported to be used by bats in BC.

Awning parameters

The majority of the awnings reporting bat use were facing west/southwest/south (68%; n=50) with a few reports of bats using awnings on the east and north side of the structure. A total of 16 reports indicated bats clinging to the fabric of blind without housing units, and 31 reports indicated bats crawling up into the housing. Of these 31 reports, 21 reports identified the width of the gap at the bottom of the housing. This gap ranged from 1.5" to 2.5" (Figure 3). Bats used this gap to roost in during the day. Some reports indicated that bats also used the gap between the housing unit and the wall of the building.

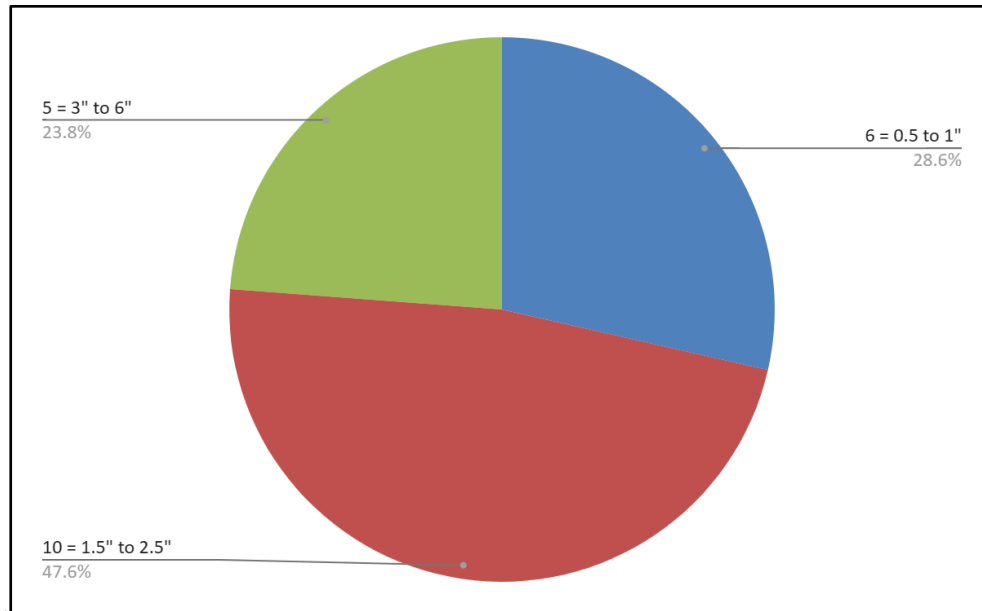


Figure 3. Pie chart showing the results from the 21 reports where the housing gap was identified, indicating preferences for gap width by roosting bats.

Awning use

Bats were seen in awnings mostly in the summer (82%; n=50), fewer in the shoulder seasons, and even two in winter in Kelowna and Salmon Arm.

All reports were of awnings that were not on a timer. Timing of use was difficult to quantify as results varied widely with location and site, however south and west facing awnings were mainly lowered in the afternoon, with east facing awnings lowered in the morning. Awnings reported included both manual awnings (54%) and motorized awnings (46%).

Bat injuries and mortality

Out of the 97 reports with bats, 36 reports (37%) indicated that bats had been either injured, killed, or both at their locations (Figure 4). In addition, some reports had multiple mortalities and/or events, with a total of 88 dead bats in awnings since 2014 (Figure 5). Eighteen sites had one dead bat, 13 sites had 2 to 10 dead bats, two sites had more than 10 fatalities, and three sites had single injured bats. Not all sites reported if the awnings had housing units or not, but injuries or mortalities occurred mostly in awnings with housing (79%; n=24) versus awnings with no housing.

A report indicated a site with two awnings where a minimum of 10 bat mortalities have occurred each summer since 2017. These awnings were installed to shade the deck over a commercial dining area. The awnings are 14' long with a housing gap 1.5" wide at the bottom where the bats go in. The awning facing the SE aspect is used more by bats than the one facing SW. The residents are aware of the bats, but are unable to leave the blinds down throughout the summer when the bats are roosting as winds

blow them around frequently. A photo of one of these awnings is seen below (Figure 6). Additional awning photos are seen in Appendix 4.

All the reports with bats using awnings and those with injuries or mortality were mapped (Figure 7). The majority of the reports were in the Okanagan (Figure 8), while some were also in the Kootenay region, followed by the Central Interior and Fraser Valley.

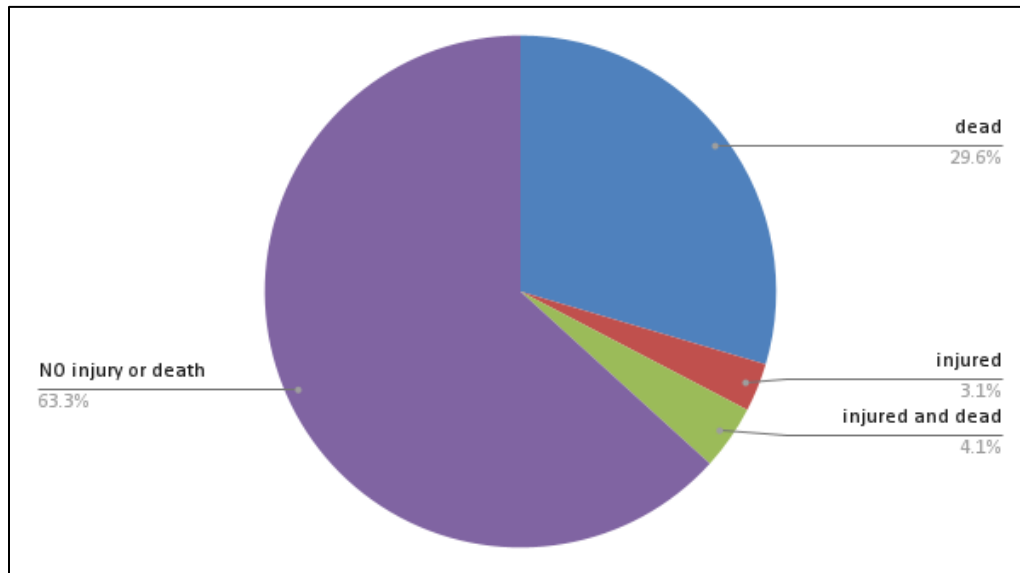


Figure 4. Pie chart of the 97 bat reports with bats using awnings showing the percentage of reports with bat injuries and/or mortalities.

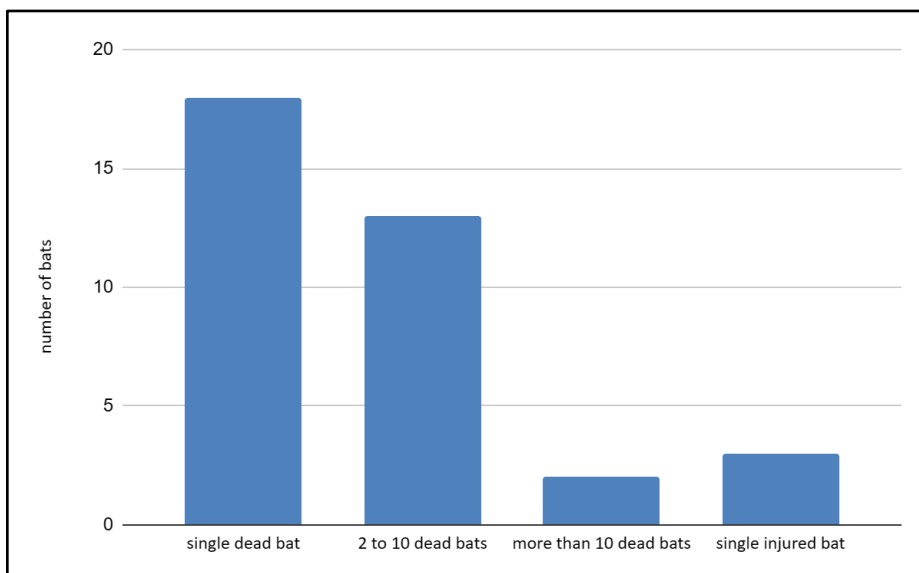


Figure 5. Bar graph depicting the number of injured or dead bats found per site.



Figure 6. Photo of one of the two Solace Solutions Screens in Salmon Arm where high bat mortality occurs each summer.

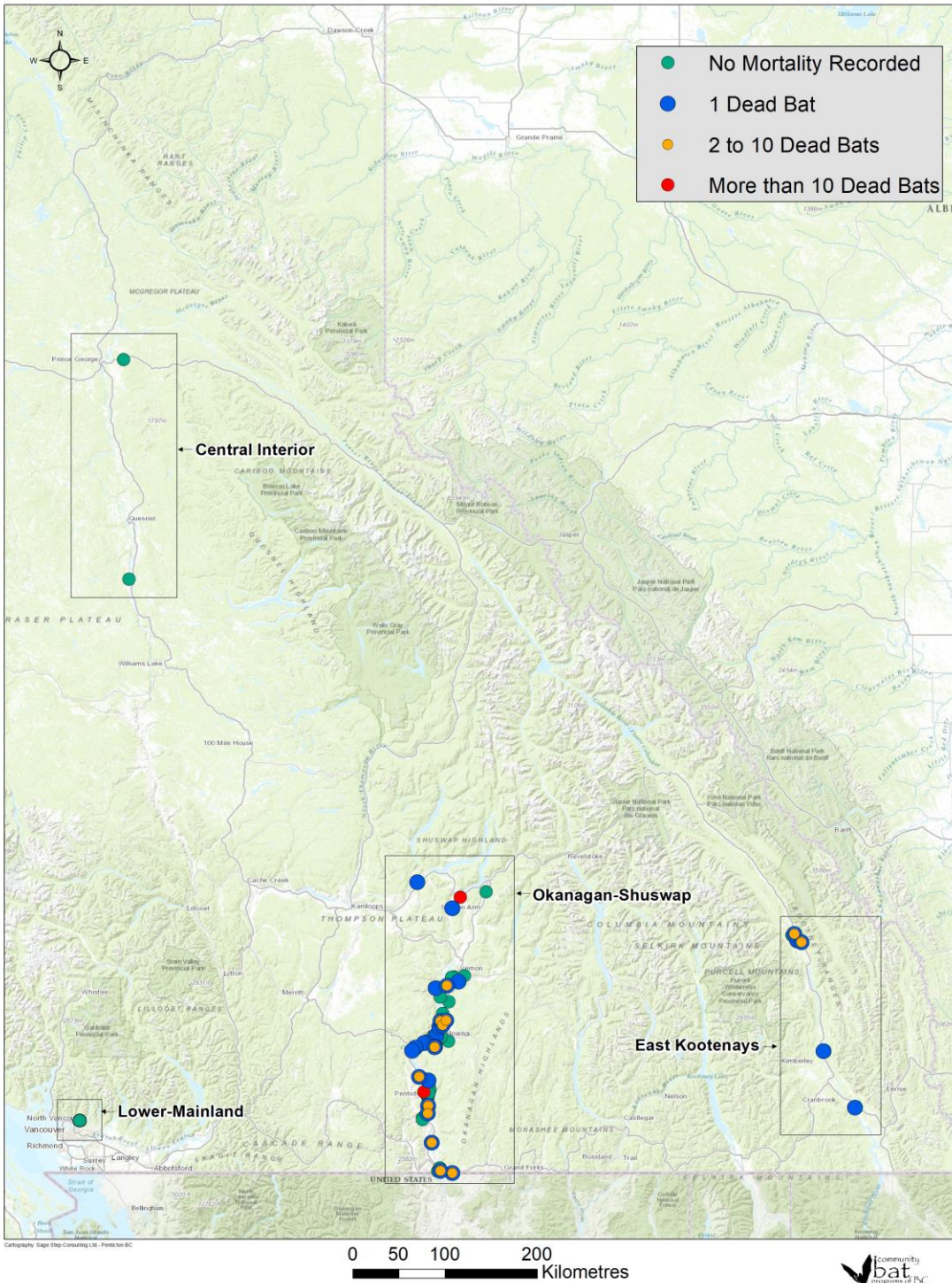


Figure 7. Map of sites reporting bats in blinds and awnings, as well as those sites that reported injured bats and dead bats throughout BC.

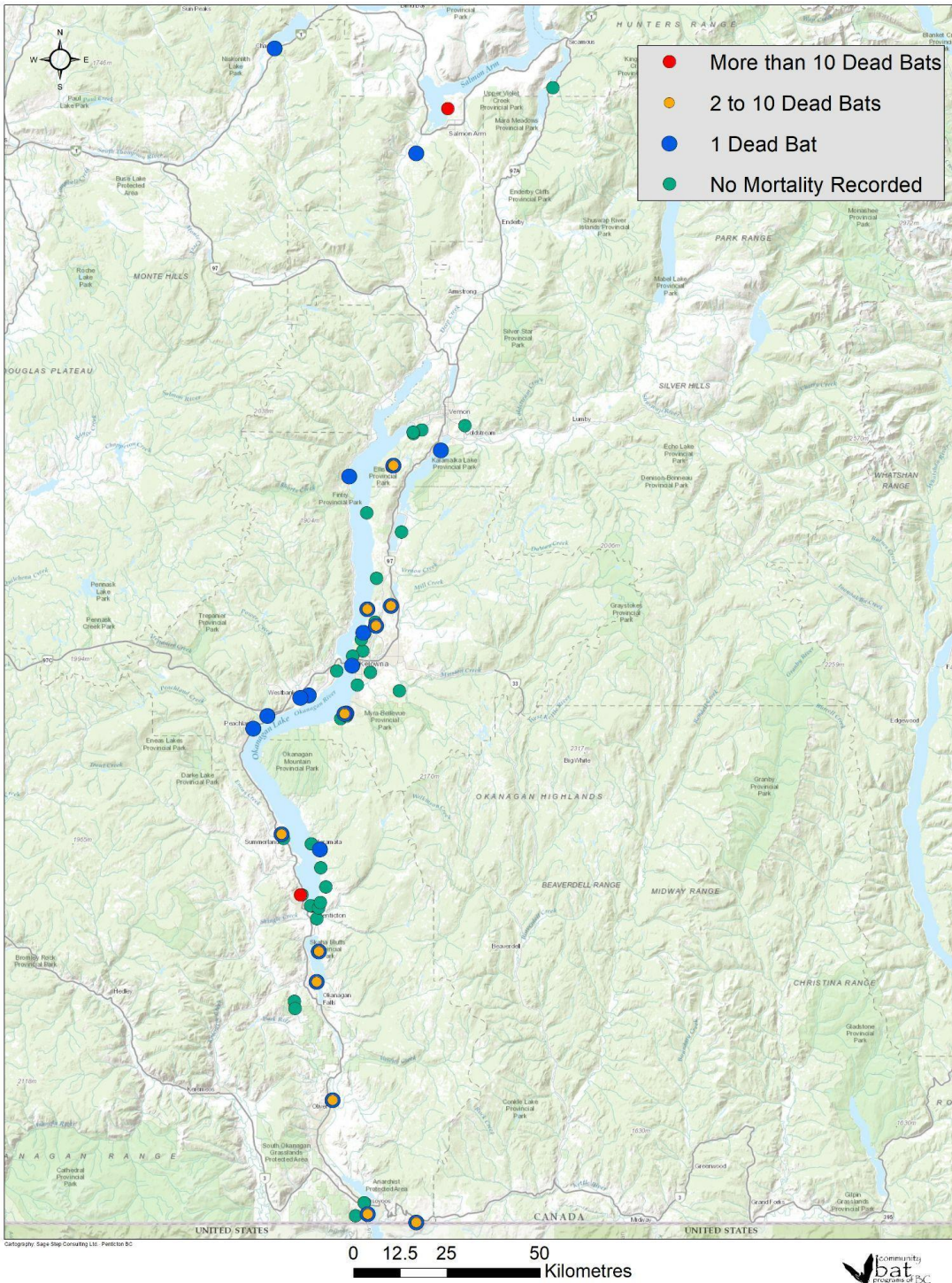


Figure 8. Map of the Okanagan region showing the reports of bats using blinds and awnings without injury or mortality, those reporting one dead bat, 2 to 10 dead bats, and more than 10 dead bats in one site.

Discussion

Although an equal amount of effort was put into getting the message out about the survey, most reports received were from the Okanagan, and a few in the Kootenays. When coordinators reviewed past reports, it was also clear that the Okanagan had received the largest amount of reports since 2014. This is likely as a result of the typically warmer climates in the Okanagan compared to the rest of BC, and residents adapting their housing technology to suit energy efficiency in those warmer regions. Studies have shown that awnings reduce cooling energy (i.e. air conditioner use) and also keep maximum temperatures lower, in the rooms with exterior awnings, thus providing both energy savings and increased comfort (Gusdorf et al., 2011). Presumably, exterior awnings also serve the same function. The Talus website claims that exterior Habitat Screens block 99% of the sun's heat and glare before reaching the window.

With climate change, heat waves are expected to occur more frequently (Meehl and Tebaldi, 2004). Homeowners will be looking at options to become more energy efficient by shielding buildings against sunlight and extreme heat. Knowing that bats are attracted to exterior awnings and that they can cause injury or death to bats (37% of reports), it is important to formulate an action plan to prevent such incidents.

Identify the root cause of the problem:

The root cause of the problem is that the bats are attracted to awnings and are either crawling into the housing mechanism or behind the awnings, and getting squished when the awning is rolled up or down. The majority of the bats were injured by awnings that had housing cases, those some were also injured while hanging on to the screen fabric.

Clarifying the problem:

The following is a summary of the results collected with the awning survey:

- Awnings in the Okanagan valley and the Rocky Mountain Trench in the East Kootenays of BC are attracting bats
- Vertical blinds/shades (both manual and motorized) are used more by bats in these regions than other types of awnings,
- Awnings used during the summer months had more incidents with bats
- Awnings installed along all aspects had bat use, but those facing south/southwest/west had the most use.
- Bats may roost in the housing, in gaps behind or around the awning, or on the extended screens.
- Awnings with housing units (with gaps at the bottom, top or sides) allow bats to crawl inside and roost there during the day),
- It is impractical for most residents to leave awnings extended throughout the summer months as windy conditions prevent this.
- People are willing to help bats fight the rising threat of awnings and are looking for guidance.

The goal:

The objective is to deter bats from being attracted to awnings. However, the primary goal is to prevent bats from being injured or inadvertently killed by these structures.

Develop an action plan:

List of actions:

1. Prevent bats from being attracted to awnings
 - a. Leave the area brightly lit at night.
 - b. Install a fan that blows on the awning at night (can be set up with a timer).
 - c. Hanging orchard tape, flashing, mylar strips or balloons that wave in the breeze.
 - d. Using aerosol dog or cat repellents on a particular spot (e.g., Critter Ridder). Be sure to apply when the bats are not present. It will need to be re-applied regularly.
 - e. Ultrasonic devices should not be used as there is no scientific evidence that they work, and they have negative effects on other animals including dogs and cats.
2. Prevent bats from going into the housing unit of awnings.
 - a. Change the design of the housing units so that there are no gaps on top or along the sides.
 - b. Re-design with a mechanism that closes the section along the bottom where the blind rolls out.
 - c. Ensure installation instructions clearly state that there should be no gaps behind the unit. Use a wood strip to seal the gap between the unit and the building. Bats can squeeze into a ¼" gap so ensure all holes are sealed.
 - d. Contact manufacturers
 - i. Via phone/email to ask if they are aware of animals using the awnings and gather reports from them of use and mitigation used.
 - ii. Send manufacturers this report to identify the concerns and threat to bats.
 - iii. Work with the manufacturers to design a housing that will not allow bats to roost in it.
 - iv. Discuss ways that residents can do to retro-fit existing awnings to mitigate use by bats (i.e., add a cover, seal holes, etc.).
 - e. Encourage user to stow awnings after daily use and ensure it is closed after sunset.
 - f. Encourage awning users to look for bats and bat signs and report bat use of awnings to the CBPBC.
3. Prevent bats from roosting behind the awnings that do not have housing units.
 - a. Installation instructions should clearly state that there should be no gaps behind the unit. For example, "Use a wood strip to seal the gap between the unit and the building. Bats can squeeze into a ¼" gap so ensure all holes are sealed."
 - b. Install a slippery surface behind the awnings, against the building, so that bats cannot grasp and roost, such as tin or plastic.
 - c. Keep the awnings rolled up and closed after sunset to minimize the gap size where bats enter into the housing or behind the blinds. Keep them rolled-up and closed all night.
4. Educate residents, governing bodies, distributors of awnings about the potential risk to bats.
 - a. Send out a press release with the results of the *Don't Squish Bats* survey and distribute throughout BC.
 - b. Make this report available on the CBPBC website, www.bcbats.ca

- c. Distribute the report to program partners and bat organizations to identify the emerging threat to them.
 - d. Contact homeowners and ask them to send a form letter to the distributors and/or manufacturers (Appendix 5).
 - e. Develop best management practices (BMPs).
 - f. Add section on BMPs to the CBPBC website, www.bcbats.ca
 - g. Distribute BMPs.
 - h. Add a section about awnings to the Bat-Friendly Communities document and promote Bat-friendly Communities.
 - i. Approach builders, architects, and building inspectors.
 - j. Approach groups that are doing outreach on climate action.
 - k. Contact other bat organizations to understand the threat of bats and awnings in other provinces and countries.
 - l. Work with other organizations to mitigate this threat to bats.
 - m. Leave the survey link up on the CBP of BC website for the summer of 2024 to acquire more data on the issue.
5. Reassess this emerging threat in 5 years
- a. Evaluate if the survey and report has impacted the awning industry, caused an increase in resident reports, and/or has resulted in further investigations or documentations regarding this threat.

Literature Cited

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Appendix 1. Press release

Coordinators in the Kootenays, Okanagan, Thompson, Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Regions edited this press release and sent it out in their regions.

For immediate release

January 23, 2024

BC Bat Study Requests Homeowners to Report Bats Using Exterior Window Shades and Power Awnings

Southern British Columbia. Bats are getting injured or even squished by roll up blinds and power awnings that provide shade to homes in the summer. The BC Community Bat Program is actively seeking assistance to assess how common this is and address it accordingly.

Bats are important wildlife that provide natural insect pest control. “Most people install exterior roll up blinds and power awnings on the south or west side of their house to help create shade and cool their house. The last thing they want to do is harm bats as a result of their action,” says Paula Rodriguez de la Vega, BC Community Bat Program Provincial coordinator. “However, over the last few years, we’ve been getting reports in southern BC of bats being attracted to the shutter housing or box into which the blinds or awnings roll into. Bats are accidentally and unintentionally getting squished or injured when the blinds are rolled up and then they fall out dead when the blinds get rolled down”.

The BC Community Bat Program aims to collect additional reports to assess the prevalence of this issue. According to Rodriguez de la Vega, if it is determined that such incidents are frequent, the program intends to engage with manufacturers. The goal is to explore potential design changes, ensuring that awnings and blinds no longer pose a threat to these important animals, turning them into unintentional hazards.

Nine of the 15 species that live in British Columbia are listed as at risk of disappearing. “We only have insect eating bats in BC. They control nocturnal insect populations and help cycle nutrients from wetlands to forests,” says Rodriguez de la Vega.

Bats differ from mice in their behavior; they do not construct nests, nor do they chew or scratch to access buildings, as rodents often do. According to Rodriguez de la Vega, some bats are drawn to small, secure spaces in human-made structures, making awning or shade boxes appealing to them. To address this, a potential solution involves modifying the awning box design by incorporating features like broom bristles or a cap to seal the entry gap, effectively preventing bats from entering.

Bats are in trouble as they face many threats including white-nose syndrome (WNS), a disease that has killed millions of bats since 2006. WNS does not affect people or pets.

If you have seen bats roosting in your summer roll up blinds, shades, or awnings in the past years, please contact the BC Community Bat Program at <https://bcbats.ca/got-bats/dontsquishbats/>, email info@bcbats.ca or call 1-855-922-2287. To report dead bats this winter, please visit www.bcbats.ca. The

BC Community Bat Program is funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Habitat Stewardship Program, and administered by the BC Conservation Foundation.

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Photos:

Bat on rollup blinds_by OCBP. New study is asking for assistance from the public: please report sightings of bats using your exterior roll up blinds, shades, or awnings.

Bat injured by awning_by Troy Corbin. If you have seen bats getting unintentionally injured or squished by exterior awnings and roll up blinds, please participate in the study to help biologists understand if this is a common occurrence.

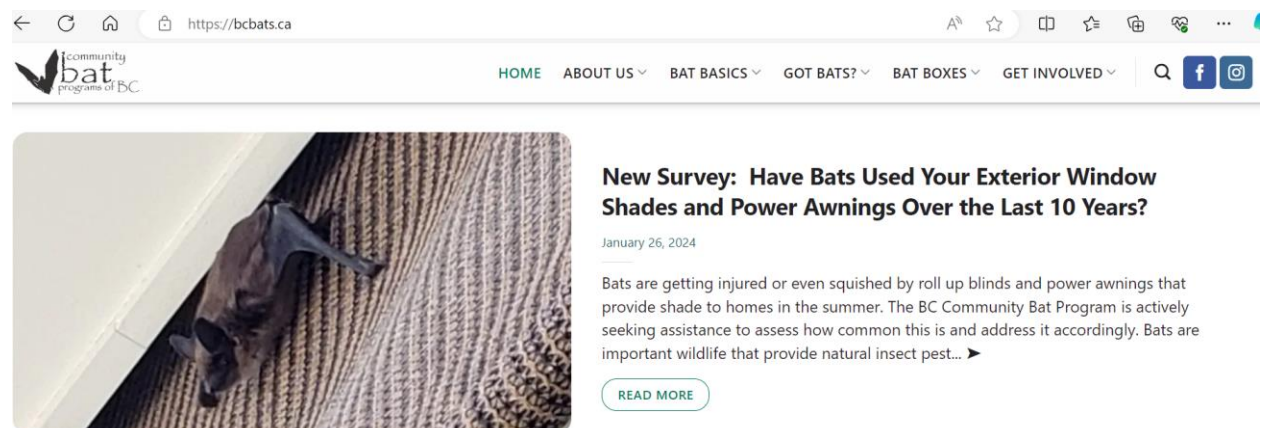
Roll-down shade. BC Bat Study requests reports of bats using exterior window shades and power awnings like this one.

For more information, please contact:

Your name and contact info.

Paula Rodriguez de la Vega, Provincial Coordinator, BC Community Bat Program. info@bcbats.ca, C. 250-809-8152.

Press release also appeared on our website homepage, under 'Latest Updates':



The screenshot shows the homepage of the BC Community Bat Program website. The browser address bar displays 'https://bcbats.ca'. The website header includes a navigation menu with links: HOME, ABOUT US, BAT BASICS, GOT BATS?, BAT BOXES, and GET INVOLVED. There are also social media icons for Facebook and Instagram. The main content area features a large image of a bat on a textured surface, likely a blind or awning. To the right of the image is a headline: 'New Survey: Have Bats Used Your Exterior Window Shades and Power Awnings Over the Last 10 Years?'. Below the headline is the date 'January 26, 2024' and a short paragraph of text. A 'READ MORE' button is located at the bottom of the text block.

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community bat program of BC

HOME ABOUT US BAT BASICS GOT BATS? BAT BOXES GET INVOLVED 🔍 f i

New Survey: Have Bats Used Your Exterior Window Shades and Power Awnings Over the Last 10 Years?

January 26, 2024

Bats are getting injured or even squished by roll up blinds and power awnings that provide shade to homes in the summer. The BC Community Bat Program is actively seeking assistance to assess how common this is and address it accordingly. Bats are important wildlife that provide natural insect pest... ►

READ MORE

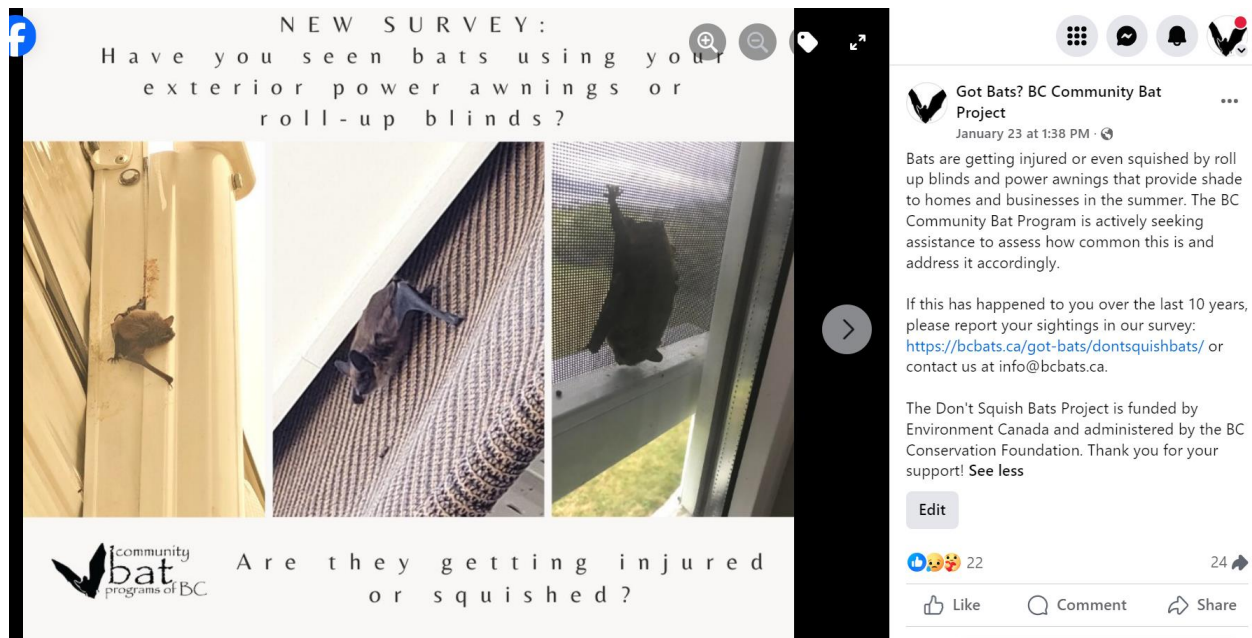
Appendix 2. Social Media Posts and Website

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/bcbats/> 1.7 K followers

New Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/gotbats/> 8 followers

January 23, 2024 Facebook post

Results: Reach 1,430, Engagement 106



Have you had bats roosting in your exterior window shades or power awnings? We want to hear from you! Please report your observations at <https://bcbats.ca/got-bats/dontsquishbats/>

We have more than 30 reports already from the Okanagan of bats being attracted to the shutter housing or box into which the blinds or awnings roll up into. Bats are accidentally and unintentionally getting squished when the blinds are rolled up and then they fall out dead when the blinds get rolled down.

The BC Community Bat Program is determined to understand the prevalence of this issue and needs your help. If you've experienced this in the last 10 years, anywhere in BC, we want to hear from you. Report your observations at <https://bcbats.ca/got-bats/dontsquishbats/>, email info@bcbats.ca, or call 1-855-922-2287.

Your observations are crucial in our efforts to protect these essential members of our ecosystem. Thank you for being our eyes on the ground!

January 29, 2024

Results: Reach 3,154 Engagement 150



Have you seen any bats using your exterior window shades, roll down blinds or awnings over the last 10 years? Did any get squished, injured or die? Please participate in this study. Take our survey!

<https://bcbats.ca/got-bats/dontsquishbats/>

Last week to enter your observations!

February 20, 2024

Results: Reach 1,152 Engagement 66



BC Community Bat Program Website Survey - Don't Squish Bats Project

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NEWS | REGIONS | DONATE & HELP BATS

HOME ABOUT US ▾ BAT BASICS ▾ GOT BATS? ▾ BAT BOXES ▾ GET INVOLVED ▾ 🔍 f i

BC COMMUNITY BAT PROGRAMS

HELP PEOPLE AND BATS

If you have bats in your house, barn, or property, please [contact us](#).

If you need to immediately remove a single bat from your living room or elsewhere in your house, [here's how!](#)

White Nose Syndrome Surveillance

REPORT A DEAD BAT
REPORT WINTER BAT ACTIVITY

Don't Squish Bats Project

REPORT BATS IN AWNINGS,
WINDOW BLINDS OR SHADES





NEWS | REGIONS | DONATE & HELP BATS

HOME ABOUT US ▾ BAT BASICS ▾ GOT BATS? ▾ BAT BOXES ▾ GET INVOLVED ▾ 🔍 f i

Don't Squish Bats

Welcome to our community-driven initiative focused on the well-being of bats in our neighborhoods! We are seeking your valuable input through a simple questionnaire designed to understand the interaction between bats and the awnings of homes and businesses.

Over the last 10 years, have bats used the awnings or roll down blinds attached to your house or one of your buildings?

FILL OUT THE SURVEY



Appendix 3. Sample email to partners and volunteer Bat Ambassadors

Subject: Calling All Bat Ambassadors! Help Protect Bats from getting squished

Dear [Ambassador's Name],

I trust this message finds you well. As a valued Bat Ambassador from the [Kootenay] regional bat program, we're reaching out to enlist your support in addressing a critical issue affecting our local bat population in the [Kootenays].

Roll-up blinds and power awnings, designed to provide summer shade to homes, are posing an unexpected threat to bats in the area. We believe these structures may inadvertently harm bats, and we're keen to assess the extent of the problem.

Recent reports in southern BC suggest that bats are being attracted to the housing of blinds and awnings, leading to accidental harm when the blinds are rolled up and subsequent fatalities when they are lowered.

The BC Community Bat Program is actively seeking assistance to assess the prevalence of this issue and address it accordingly. Your input is crucial! If it turns out to be widespread, our goal is to collaborate with manufacturers to redesign these structures, ensuring they do not become a threat to these vital animals.

We understand the significance of exterior roll-up blinds and power awnings in creating shade and cooling homes. Therefore, we recommend potential solutions, such as modifying the design of awning boxes with broom bristles or a cap to close the entry gap, preventing bats from crawling in.

As a Bat Ambassador, your role in spreading awareness is pivotal. If you come across instances of bats roosting in summer roll-up blinds, shades, or awnings, please share your experiences with us. You can contact the BC Community Bat Program at <https://bcbats.ca/got-bats/dontsquishbats/>. Or directly per email to your regional coordinator.

Thank you for being such a key player in our conservation crew! Your commitment as a Bat Ambassador is super important in looking out for our bats.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

BC Community Bat Program

Appendix 4. Photos of some of the awnings and blinds



Photo 1. Manual Coolaroo blind with no housing. Awning faces east and is shading a window. Several bats (up to 10) crawl up in behind this awning during summer and have been injured or died from awning use.



Photo 2. Manual Coolaroo blind with housing. Awning faces north and is shading a deck. Reported about 3 bats over several years that hung on fabric and crawled into housing, but none were injured or died.



Photo 3. Manual unknown name brand with housing. This awning is facing south and shading a sundeck. Report of about 4 bats since 2012 that went into housing, but none were injured or died. Bottom gap is about 3" wide.



Photo 4. Talus Habitat Screen with housing. This homeowner has 2 screens, one South the other East-facing. They have seen about 4 bats per year since 2014. One bat died when rolling up the sunshade, and another injured that had to be euthanized. Bats go into the housing from the bottom which is 1.5" wide, but also from the top where there is an opening. Owner has added a black rubber piece to the front to try to prevent bats from entering the housing.



Photo 5. Motorized Phantom screen, not on a timer. This awning faces east and is shading a deck. Reported finding 5 dead dried up bats in between the layers of the roller screen. Homeowner assumes the bats got stuck between the layers of the roller screen when rolling up the shade. The gap is 6" wide.



Photo 6. Unknown name brand of roll down blind. Reported 7 dead bats at once when rolling shades down.



Photo 7. Motorized Talus roll down blinds with housing, not on a timer. Although there are 3 blinds, bats only use the North-facing one. They have seen several bats per year since 2022, sometimes in pairs. Bats roost behind the screen in the 1/2" gap against the stucco. They do not get injured there.

Appendix 5. Sample form letter that homeowners could send to the manufacturers

Dear **Manufacturer,**

We hope this message finds you well. We are writing to share our experience with the roll-up blinds and awnings we purchased from your company and to express our concern regarding an issue we have encountered.

While we are generally satisfied with the quality and functionality of your product, we have recently noticed a concerning problem. It appears that the design of the awning is inadvertently attracting bats. We have noticed bats roosting in the blinds during the day. This is concerning as bats may be injured or killed when the blind is opened or rolled up after use.

As you are likely aware, bats are important creatures in our ecosystem. They play a crucial role in insect control, among other benefits. Moreover, bats are protected in BC, and it is imperative that we take every measure to ensure their well-being.

It is disheartening to think of these installations, which have brought us much convenience and comfort, as potential death traps for these beneficial animals. Do you have any interim solutions of what I can do with this particular model to prevent bats from using the blinds? Are there modifications that you offer to this model in order to discourage bats from entering the housing of the blind/awning?

We are reaching out to you with a sincere request to reconsider the design of your products to prevent such occurrences in the future. We understand that design changes may require time and resources, but we believe that it is a worthwhile investment to protect wildlife and uphold our collective responsibility to the environment.

We appreciate your commitment to quality and sustainability and hope that you will take our feedback into consideration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Homeowner's name