

Bats

- BC is home to 16 species of bat (family *Vespertilionidae*)
- Bats can transmit rabies, but the disease occurs rarely, in only approximately 0.5% of the BC bat population
- Bats are Schedule A animals under the *BC Wildlife Act* – it is illegal to kill or harass them, and to disturb them during breeding season (between May and August)



California Bat

Understanding Bats

Bats are nocturnal mammals that roost during the day and begin feeding at dusk. They have one litter of 1-2 babies or “pups” each spring. Pups gather in “bat nurseries” while their mothers are out feeding. They learn to fly at 3 weeks old and quickly become independent.

Common Conflicts

Bats are found in urban and rural areas and sometimes enter human structures to roost, or accidentally, and may get caught in objects like insect traps, netting, or fencing. Sometimes they are attacked by pets.

Humane Choices

Killing bats for nuisance reasons is illegal.

Relocation of adult bats should only be done outside the breeding season within the animal’s home range, and as per the *BC Wildlife Act*. If roosting access has not been removed, more bats may arrive, so follow-up monitoring is needed.

The BC SPCA strongly encourages non-lethal, non-contact methods. Prevention and exclusion comes first, and if necessary, eviction. Eviction should be done carefully to avoid potentially orphaning young.



Hoary Bat

Did you know?

BC bats eat large numbers of insects – up to half their own body weight per night in the summer.

Their guano makes excellent fertilizer!

Disease Concerns

- White-Nose Syndrome (WNS) is a fungal disease spread by contact with humans
- WNS is named for the white fungus that grows on the noses and bodies of bats
- Bats die of starvation after waking from hibernation to fight the fungus
- Eastern bat populations have been devastated by WNS, killing an estimated 6 million bats; WNS is not yet in BC, but was reported in Washington State in March 2016

If a bat has contact with people or pets, immediately contact your public health authority to arrange for rabies testing

Conflict Resolution

Bats do not need to be evicted if there is little chance for human contact, but it may be considered if guano cannot be regularly cleaned, or bats continually enter human living spaces. Bats do not usually occupy buildings during winter months, and instead choose to hibernate in mines or caves October to March. For more information on addressing bat conflicts, *flip page over*.

Recommended Actions & Methods	
Prevention & Exclusion Before any conflict, and to prevent future issues	Maintain residential structures → To find entry, look for discoloured rub marks or guano around openings, or watch bats exiting from before dusk to a half hour after dusk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Block access to gaps around chimneys, window air conditioners, and openings in interior walls that lead to cellars or attics ✓ Tarps strung below roost sites can catch guano
Eviction Best time October to March, possible September and April	Evict the animal → Do not install one-way doors May through August, this is illegal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Install a one-way door to allow the bats to leave the roost, but not re-enter ✓ Leave door in place for 5-7 nights ✓ Use flashlight to thoroughly check any cracks, crevices or corners for bats before sealing an opening ✓ Clean out guano and remove soil insulation ✓ Use 10% bleach solution to disinfect items contacted by bat ✓ Seal all potential access points 12mm or more ✓ Optional: providing an alternate exterior bat house may discourage bats from returning to the building ✓ Follow all prevention and exclusion above
Eviction Bat accidentally trapped in house	Capture and release <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gently capture using a butterfly net, a glass or plastic container and a tool to scoop them into the container, like folder cardboard or a spatula ✓ For bats on the floor, catch with gloved hands or by rolling them in thick towel ✓ Release as quickly as possible out of harm's way, on a tree or other vertical surface so they can fly away ✓ Follow all prevention and exclusion steps above

These are legal, regulated methods for euthanasia when animals are suffering - but they are **not recommended*** as they can cause further suffering and/or are difficult to administer:

- Hand capture, mist nests, harp traps
- Penetrating captive bolt
- Cervical dislocation
- Nitrogen or argon gas
- Manually applied blunt trauma that induces immediate unconsciousness
- Carbon monoxide – pure gas cylinder in sealed chamber with regulator

*email wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca for information on these methods

It is **illegal** to use...

- Freezing (including dry ice)
- Glue traps
- Bait poisons or chloroform
- Drowning or suffocation
- Carbon dioxide, as all bats in BC are CO₂ tolerant
- Carbon monoxide by vehicle exhaust
- Electrocuting of conscious animal

