



I have bats in my attic! What do I do?

Information on what to do if bats are roosting in your building

First steps of excluding bats

First things first— Don't panic! Bats are rarely aggressive, but you should never touch or handle a bat with bare hands. If you must come in contact with a bat, always wear thick leather gloves.

Bats roosting in your attic or other building are not looking to come in contact with you. Any bat that may end up in your living space has done so by accident. Often in late July when young of the year begin to fly, they lose their way getting back into the roost and can end up flying in open doors and windows into your living space.

If you must exclude the bats from your building, you may conduct the exclusion yourself, or hire a pest-control operator. **Note— four bat species in Wisconsin, including those most likely roosting in buildings are listed as threatened, and are protected by the endangered species law in Wisconsin.** The Wisconsin DNR and Wisconsin Bat Program understand that most people do not wish to share their homes with wild animals so the WDNR created a Broad Incidental Take Permit and Authorization. This legal document covers any take (killing) of bats that may oc-

cur during exclusion and those conducting exclusions are not required to obtain a permit from the WDNR. However, note that included in the Broad Incidental Take Permit and Authorization is a **non-exclusion period from June 1 through August 15 every year, when exclusion may not be completed except for human health and safety reasons.** This period is set in place to protect pups who are unable to fly for about 4 weeks after birth. Excluding mothers from their pups during this time will not only cause the pups to die, but frantic mothers attempting to get back to their pups may find their way into your living space.

- More information about the Cave Bat Broad Incidental Take Permit and Authorization can be found on <http://dnr.wi.gov> key words <bat conservation plan>

If you choose to conduct exclusion yourself, information on the process can be found on <http://wiatri.net/inventory/bats>. The process begins by identifying openings where bats are entering and exiting the building. Next a one-way door is installed to allow the bats to leave but not return. After one-way doors have been installed for at least one week,

you may begin the process of sealing the openings to prevent bats entering. Keep in mind the process may take several years to permanently seal bats out.

If you choose to hire a pest-control operator, there are many to choose from in the state. Find a company that guarantees their exclusion job will be bat-free for several years and will return if bats still enter your home.

Safety and health

A very small percentage (<0.05%) of bats carry rabies. Because bats can come in contact with humans, especially if they are roosting in homes, Center for Disease Control has this information regarding rabies and bats: The easiest option regarding bat and human contact is to capture the bat and send it to the State Lab of Hygiene for testing. If the bat cannot be captured for rabies testing, and if someone comes in contact with a bat and had no protection (gloves), the person should immediately seek medical attention and post-exposure vaccinations. Additionally, if a bat is observed flying in the room with a sleeping person, inebriated person, or young child, either capture the bat for testing or the person should be vaccinated.

For more detailed information visit the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/exposure/animals/bats.html>.

There's a bat in my living space, how do I get rid of it?

During late summer, juvenile bats may find

themselves lost in your living space. Do not panic and do not attempt to swat the bat down with a blanket or tennis racket. If the bat is flying, attempt to trap it in a room with no people. If possible, leave a window or door open to the outside so the bat may fly out freely. If the bat does not exit by itself, wait until the bat lands and capture it under a box. Cover the bat with the box and slide a piece of paper or other material behind the bat. Release the bat outside.

Unfortunately there is no simple solution for getting bats out of your attic. Relocation of the colony does not work. Not only is it nearly impossible to capture all bats from the colony, bats have an amazing homing ability. Even if the whole colony was taken 200 miles away, the majority of the colony would find their way back to the original roost.

In addition to conducting exclusion, the Wisconsin Bat Program also highly recommends installing a bat house to offer the bats alternate habitat. Bats are beneficial to have around— they eat mosquitoes. Offering alternate habitat also makes the exclusion process more successful because bats find the box and will begin using that instead of trying to find their way back into your house.

Information on bat houses can be found on the Bat Program website <http://wiatri.net/inventory/bats>.



Questions regarding bat houses, exclusion and bat roosts may be directed to Heather Kaarakka: heather.kaarakka@wisconsin.gov or 608.266.2576