



Co-existing with Bats in Ohio



Bats are flying mammals and found in nearly every habitat throughout Ohio. In fact, most bats live near humans without ever being detected. Feeding at night, these nocturnal animals have strong senses and use echolocation (built-in sonar) to eat thousands of flying insects each night. Thirteen bat species have been recorded in Ohio, but humans often only encounter only one or two. Bats are a rabies vector species, but it is very uncommon to encounter a rabid bat.

Bats are the only flying mammals. There are 13 species of bats recorded in Ohio; the most commonly encountered species generally include little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) and big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*).

Bats are very important to the environment. Bats feed one or two hours after sunset and also before sunrise. In one night, a single bat can eat its bodyweight (thousands) of mosquitoes and flying insects. Multiply this number by number of bats in a colony, and the benefit to humans is enormous, especially when West Nile Virus is prevalent in an area.

Where do bats live?

Typically, bats have two types of sites used for gathering - winter hibernation sites and summer roosting sites. Bats can enter buildings by using existing openings and cracks as small as 3/8 inch to roost in attics. The summer roosts for maternal colonies (females and their flightless offspring) are usually where humans encounter large numbers of bats.

During the summer, pregnant females are often found congregating in human-made structures where conditions are warm, dry and dark. Babies are born in May and June and while baby bats have a quick growth rate, flying as soon as three weeks after birth, it can take six to nine weeks for babies to completely wean from their mothers. **If you have a known maternal colony, please consider waiting out the weaning process to ensure all bats are able to fly out of the structure each night.** For help assessing your situation and safely evicting a colony during an appropriate season, call SCRAM! Wildlife Control.

Have bats in your attic?

When dealing with potentially high volumes of bats, it is best to seek professional expertise due to human health concerns and to ensure that all bats are removed safely.



SCRAM! Wildlife Control, a department at Ohio Wildlife Center, offers a biologically-sound solution. Call 614-763-0696 for details.

SCRAM! will provide you with the only no-kill animal control service in Ohio. We use the biology of the animals in question to offer a **natural, humane and permanent** solution to deal with wildlife in and around your home or business. SCRAM! agents will work with you to safely evict, exclude and prevent wildlife from coming back into your home. Guaranteed!



Found a bat flying around in your living space?

Sometimes a bat accidentally makes its way into your home. If a bat is flying around your room, leave the room and close the door until the bat has landed. If the bat appears uninjured, encourage the bat to leave on its own with the following steps:

- confine the bat to one room (close interior doors to isolate)
- enter the room when the bat has stopped flying
- open an exterior door or the window (remove screen, and pull back curtains)
- turn off the lights and cover any other light sources such as digital clocks, DVD or VHS players

The bat should fly out of the room through the open door or window when evening arrives. You can also turn outside lights on, to help attract bugs that will make it more tempting for the bat to leave the house. If the bat appears sick, injured, or is unable to fly, you can bring it to Ohio Wildlife Center's hospital. Be sure to wear gloves and approach the animal with caution.

Do not attempt to evict/release any bats in cold weather!! If bats are found in a structure during cold weather spells and must be removed, they must be brought into Ohio Wildlife Center's hospital. As a general guideline, if temperatures are 60°F or above for multiple days, bats can be released outside.

Do bats carry rabies?

Yes, bats can carry rabies, but it is not common. Rabies is a viral disease (transmitted through bites) affecting the nervous system. It has the ability to infect all mammals. Most human cases result from rabid bat bites, but statistically, fewer than 4% of bats test positive for rabies in Ohio (www.odh.ohio.gov). You should never handle a bat unless you need to. If you must approach a bat, please exercise caution. You cannot tell just by looking if an animal has rabies; the animal must be submitted for testing to confirm infection.

If a bat is found in a room with a sleeping person, unattended child, mentally disabled or someone under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol it is recommended that a family doctor be contacted and post-exposure rabies prophylaxis be started in most cases. Also, if the bat is able to be caught, it should be submitted for rabies testing to confirm or deny presence of rabies. In these circumstances, the bat may be admitted to Ohio Wildlife Center's hospital for humane euthanasia.

Hours of Operation

Our wildlife hospital is located at 2661 Billingsley Road, Columbus, 43235. We are open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Ohio Wildlife Center is not a government agency; we are a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and we rely on individual donations. We would greatly appreciate a monetary donation to help with animal care.

Thank you for caring about Ohio's wildlife!