

News Release
Bats on the move
For Immediate Release
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Are you noticing more bats around your house or property? You are not alone! Mid-summer is the time when landowners typically notice more bat activity, may have bats flying into their house, and occasionally find a bat on the ground or roosting in unusual locations.

These surprise visitors are often the young pups. “In July and August, pups are learning to fly, and their early efforts may land them in locations where they are more likely to come in contact with humans”, says Rob Welsh, regional coordinator with the Thetis Island Got Bats? BC Community Bat Program. As noticed in 2021, heat and smoke may also cause bats to use unusual roost sites.

If you find a bat, alive or dead, remember to **never touch it with your bare hands**. Bats in BC are known to carry rabies at a low level; this is why it is important to avoid any contact. If you must move a bat, use a trowel or similar, and always wear leather gloves to protect yourself from direct contact. Talk to your children to make sure they understand to never touch, play or try to rescue injured or sick-looking bats. If you suspect a bite or scratch from a bat, immediately wash the area with soap and water for 15 minutes. Also contact your public health or your doctor as soon as possible, or go to the emergency department. For more information on rabies please refer to the BCCDC website <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/rabies>.

Bats are often found in close association with humans, as some species (such as the Little Brown Myotis) have adapted to live in human structures, and colonies may be found under roofs or siding, or in attics, barns, or other buildings. Female bats gather in maternity colonies to have a single pup in early summer, where they will remain until the pups are ready to fly. Having bats is viewed as a benefit by many landowners, who appreciate the insect control. Others may prefer to exclude the bats. Under the BC *Wildlife Act* it is illegal to exterminate or directly harm bats, and exclusion should only be done in the fall and winter after it is determined that the bats are no longer in the building. If you have bats on your property, the BC Community Bat Project can offer advice and support.

You can keep bats out of your living space by keeping doors and windows closed and ensuring window screens do not have any holes. If you find a live bat in a room of your home, open the window and close interior doors until the bat leaves, or follow the steps here: <https://batworld.org/what-to-do-if-you-found-a-bat/#indoors> . Always vaccinate your pets against rabies.

For information on safely moving a bat if necessary and to report bat sightings, landowners can visit the Got Bats? BC Community Bat Program’s website (www.bcbats.ca), email Thetis@bcbats.ca , or call 1-855-9BC-BATS ext 12. Call Rob Welsh direct at 250-246-1547 or email rmwelsh@telus.net. The BC Community Bat Program is supported by the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, the Forest Enhancement Society of BC, the Habitat Stewardship Program, the Government of BC, and Thetis Island Nature Conservancy.

Photo captions:

Photo1: Bats roosting in exposed locations, such as this bat on a screen door, can be left alone and will usually move on at dusk or after a few days. Photo: S. Surowy, Sea-Sky Community Bat Program.

Photo2: Baby bats, called pups, are born hairless, but soon grow fur, begin to fly, and may end up in surprising places. Always wear thick gloves if you must move a grounded bat and contact the BC Community Bat Program for guidance. Photo: Okanagan Bat Project