

Living with **Bats**

All North American bats are nocturnal, and nearly all of them migrate. They feed on insects caught in flight. They are extremely valuable in controlling insect pests. A single little brown bat can consume 1200 Mosquitoes in one hour. Bats save us billions of dollars annually by consuming agricultural insect pests such as moths, cucumber beetles, corn earworms, and grasshoppers. Contrary to some widely held views, bats are not blind and do not become entangled in peoples' hair. If a flying bat comes close to your head, it's probably because it is hunting insects that have been attracted by your body heat. Less than one bat in 20,000 has rabies, and no Montana bats feed on blood.



The Flathead Indian Reservation has 12 species of bats. Several species which have declined in numbers over the past few decades in the United States. Because of their beneficial contribution to reducing insect populations bats should be encouraged. Should a problem arise, home owners can exclude bats using humane, non-lethal methods.

Remember, Bats are passive, shy mammals and prefer to avoid contact with humans. They can sometimes be seen, however, roosting above doors or on the side of a building. This does not immediately indicate a sick animal. Many times bats get caught in a storm or do not make it back to their roosting site before dawn. They may also be injured or have ingested pesticides. Never touch or poke a bat with any object. As long as the bat is high enough to be undisturbed, they should move out of the area in a day or two. In any encounter with a bat, stay calm and keep children and animals away.

What can be done to prevent Bats from living in my house?

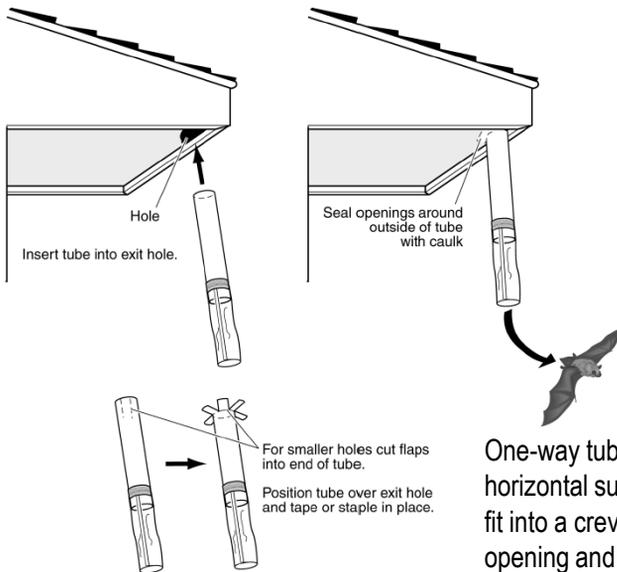
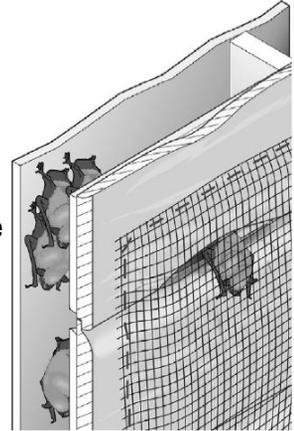
- Provide an alternate roost site, such as a properly designed and installed bat house
- Build bats out by sealing off entrance holes with aluminum flashing, wood, or ¼-inch mesh hardware cloth. Small holes around pipes, cracks, and gaps in shakes and tiles can be stuffed with balled-up galvanized window screening, pieces of fiberglass insulation, copper Stuff-it®, or copper pads.



How do I get bats out already Living in my house?

- Install exclusion devices:
 - Exclude bats by covering the one existing entry hole with a device that allows bats to exit the structure, but prevents them from reentering. From mid-August to mid-October (after the young bats have learned to fly and before cold weather arrives), or in early spring (before the birthing period in May), identify the exit(s) bats are using.

A one-way door allows bats to exit a structure, but prevents them from reentering. Hang a sheet of construction grade plastic, screen-door material, or light weight polypropylene netting (1/2 inch mesh) over the exit. Use staples or duct tape to attach the material to the building. The one-way door should extend 18 to 24 inches below the bottom edge of the opening. Leave the material loose enough to flop back after each bat exits.



One-way tubes work where one-way doors won't, such as on horizontal surfaces. A flexible pipe or cardboard tube is easy to fit into a crevice or cut to create flaps that can be fit over an opening and be stapled, nailed, or taped to a building

Trapping and relocating bats is not recommended. Bats have excellent homing instincts and, when released, they may simply return to the capture area. Yuma myotis bats released 240 miles from their roost have found their way back. The best action is to give them a few days, and let them disperse naturally. Unless they are in an area where they might be harassed. If, however, the bat remains in the open for a week or longer, call CSKT wildlife management, and we may be able to help identify what is attracting them to your area.



If you have bats reoccurring to a specific location, try modifying the area to make it less inviting to bats by hanging mesh across corners and hanging mesh across corners and hanging moving objects. Lights that attract insects also create preferred habitats for bats.

