



Bat in the House?

For a Single Bat

Sometimes a bat will accidentally fly in an open window or door. If there is absolutely no chance the bat came into contact with a person or pet, follow these steps to guide the bat back into the wild. **Please do not directly touch the bat at any time. If there is concern that an exposure occurred (bite, in the room with a sleeping person, baby, elderly, or was an unknown exposure), call the number at the bottom of the page for instructions.**

Releasing a bat:

- Pick a room to open all windows and/or doors to the outdoors, remove screens as needed.
- Turn the lights ON.
- Safely herd the bat into the room, block its access to the rest of the house.
- Make sure the bat has left before re-opening the room.
- *Please **DO NOT** attempt to hit the bat or spray it with anything.*

Bats will often fly in a “figure 8” pattern around a room as they search for an exit. Be aware of their movements. If the bat lands, *without directly touching it*; try to put a box or jar over it, and gently slide cardboard underneath to contain it. If there is no need for testing, let the bat go near the base of a tree.

Capturing and relocating bats to another area is not helpful because they usually fly back to the area where they live. The best way to avoid future encounters indoors is to find and block where it got into the room- cracks between attic space and rooms, open and unscreened doors or windows at dusk, etc.

If the bat is injured and will not be submitted for any sort of testing, it should be turned over to a licensed Delaware Wildlife Rehabilitator for care. Transport the bat securely inside a box, details can be found on the “Injured Bat” page.

If anyone is bitten, or is suspected to have been bitten by the bat, contain the animal if possible. Contact the Division of Public Health at (866)-972-9705 for further instructions. A small fraction of bats (like any mammal) may carry rabies. Be cautious around bats and seek medical attention if bitten. More information on bats and rabies can be found at www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats.



Bat in the House?

For a Bat Colony

If you suspect you have a bat colony in your house, there are a few ways to safely evict, or “exclude” the bat colony. You can perform the exclusion yourself, or hire a licensed Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator to exclude the bats. We always recommend putting up a bat box in conjunction with bat exclusions to give the bats an alternative site to live *outside* of your home.

Timing:

Good timing is essential for bat exclusions. A well-timed exclusion will allow bats to evict themselves over the course of 5-7 days.

Dates	Action	Recommendation	Follow-up
March 1 – May 15	Exclude bats	Block access into interior rooms. Use 1-way funnel at exterior exits for 1+ week <u>then</u> seal exterior exits to bat proof.	
May 15 – August 31	Block access to interior rooms	Limited bat proofing of secondary exits. <u>Wait</u> to install 1 way funnel on main exit until after Aug 31.	Proceed with normal exclusion after Aug 31, when there isn’t risk of trapping pups inside.
September 1 – November 30	Exclude bats	Block access into interior rooms. Use 1-way funnel at exterior exits for 1+ week <u>then</u> seal exterior exits to bat proof.	
December 1 – February 28	Block access to interior rooms	Avoid sealing possible hibernating bats inside walls/roof	Proceed with normal exclusion in March.

Exclusions performed during the summer months are often the most difficult – starting around May 15th, mother bats separated from their newborn pups will try all avenues to get back to their helpless young. The young, not old enough to fly, will die inside the buildings and cause a secondary problem. **If action is desired between May 15-August 31, please consider first a limited bat proofing, then complete the exclusion on Sept 1. See Best Management Practices.**



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Guidelines for Do-It-Yourself Exclusions:

- Refer to our **Best Management Practices for Bat Exclusions** to review the state-approved guidelines on how to evict bats.
- **Bat Conservation International** – (www.batcon.org/index.php/bats-a-people/bat-exclusion-instructions.html) use this step-by-step guide for evaluating your home for bats, recommendations for one-way doors, and graphics demonstrating how to perform do-it-yourself bat exclusions.
- Put up a **bat box** along with your exclusion.
- Bats do not chew into buildings, but will gain access using a 1/8th inch gap or larger created by other wildlife, or gaps in building materials. If other wildlife has caused damage, evaluate, exclude and repair those areas along with the bat exclusion.
- Bat-proof the entire structure after ALL the bats are properly excluded.
- Report your population numbers to the Delaware Bat Program to help us gain valuable information about bats in Delaware. More about this on the Bat Spotters page.

Suggestions for Hiring Nuisance Wildlife Control Officers:

- Get informed about the exclusions process.
- Call NWCO's directly for information on their services, as they can vary.
- Delaware's Best Management Practices for Nuisance Wildlife Control Officers are available to both NWCO's and the public.
- Bat exclusions should be completed by May 15, or funnels installed after August 31 to avoid the maternity season.
- Hibernating bats should wait to be excluded in spring, when insect food is available.



*Big brown bat hibernating in building
(Photo: Holly Niederriter, DE F&W)*