

Bats

Glen Dudderar, MSU Wildlife Specialist, retired
Gary L. Heilig Horticulture Educator
MSUE Ingham County July 2009

Bat Damage Control

Bats enter homes and other structures for four (4) reasons. Each reason requires a different method to control the problems created by the bat or bats.

1) One bat has been seen one time in living quarters.

When windows, door, or repairs are left open a lone bat may enter the opening. Use a large towel, broom, racquet etc. to chase or hit the bat until it drops from exhaustion or is swatted down. If caught unharmed, release outside. Otherwise, kill humanely. Close the opening and the problem should not re-occur. If bats are seen in the house, each year, see #4.

2) A few (usually 3-4 or less) bats roost during the day in a shaded window behind the shutters, under an awning, etc..

Bats in this situation are usually males using a small daytime roost. Eliminate the roost by blocking the access points behind the shutters or by trimming the bush shading the window, etc.

3) Bats are repeatedly (2 or more times) seen in the living quarters of the home, in May and August (or May thru September).

Bats in this situation are usually females and they have their young in a summer maternity roost. Young are born in June and learn to fly in mid-August. The actual roost may be in the attic, behind the chimney, under the eaves, between the walls, in ceilings, or under shingles, etc..

The only real, permanent, and appropriate solution is to locate the openings the bats are using and temporarily seal them while the bats are out flying at night. The seal can then be made permanent at the homeowners' leisure. Sealing the opening should be done before June 30 or between August 15 and September 15 to avoid sealing in baby bats or hibernating adults.

To locate the openings, watch each side of the house from sunset to 1 hour after sunset or until the bats are seen leaving. As an alternative, watch 1 hour before sunrise. Watch only on warm, still evenings or mornings because the bats will not leave the roost in inclement weather. Openings are usually found behind chimneys, under eaves, soffits, ventilators, door and window frames. Once the openings are located, seal them between 1-1/2 to 2 hours after sunset on a warm,

still evening. Seal with 3 inch wide masking tape, duct tape, fine steel wool or fiberglass insulation, etc. Make appropriate permanent repairs using wood, wood filler, caulk, foam, masonry, etc. when convenient. If it is not convenient to seal the openings after the bats leave, then use of a bat excluder (diagram 1) will prohibit the bats from entering the opening until it can be sealed in daylight hours. The bat excluder can be placed over the opening at any time and once the bats leave the roost, they will not be able to return. If problem persists, look for and seal additional openings.

Sometimes people are unwilling to temporarily seal a bat entrance after sunset when the bats have exited the building. In this situation, place a bat excluder over the entrance during the daytime. The excluder allows the bat to leave but prevents their return. After 1 week, remove the excluder and permanently seal the opening.

4.) Bats are seen in the living quarters of a home November-March. Occasionally, during warm weather in late fall winter and early spring will cause hibernating bats to wake up and move about for a brief period. Sometimes the bats blunder into the living quarters of the home. Nothing can be done at that time except to kill the individual bats as they are found. Follow the recommendations under situation #3 in May, June, or August.

Other Methods of Control

Other methods include odor repellents (moth balls, etc.) ultra-sonic generators, bright lights, bat traps, poisonous tracking powders and fumigation. All are useful to some degree but are costly, temporary, slow acting or needlessly destructive of a beneficial animals. Poisons are justified only when the openings are too numerous to seal (as in a barn) or when rabies has been detected in the roost. Then consult a professional pest control operator. The above mentioned methods of control may provide a temporary solution to the problem. The best method of control is exclusion by sealing the opening, otherwise the same problem may occur again the next roosting season.



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