

Bats

There are 17 species of bats found in North Carolina. Three of which are listed as federally endangered and one is listed as federally threatened. Five other species of bats are listed as threatened and special concern in North Carolina. A list of all of the protected species in North Carolina can be found [here](#). Due to the protection of bats, most damage situations must be resolved using non-lethal methods such as exclusion.

What kind of damage is caused by bats? Bats can roost in attic spaces, vents, chimneys, shutters and on the side of homes. Accumulation of guano and urine can cause damage to structures and sometimes create health concerns when roosting inside buildings.

Can a WCA write a depredation permit? No, WCAs are not authorized to write depredation permits for bats.

Can they be relocated? No, bats cannot be relocated in North Carolina. They must be excluded, released on site or humanely euthanized in situations where the bat carcass is needed for rabies testing.

What can I do with sick or injured bats? Bats can be rehabilitated. There are licensed rehabilitators across the state that can take in injured or orphaned wildlife. If the injury is not significant, advise individual to leave the animal alone. If the bat has a life-threatening injury or illness, it should be humanely euthanized and disposed of in a safe and sanitary manner. If no one has come into contact with the bat and there is no risk of exposure, advise individuals to leave the animal alone. If the caller has a concern about rabies, contact the County Health Department. If the animal is suffering and will not recover, it can be humanly euthanized. Place dead bats in a sealed plastic bag and dispose of them in a safe and sanitary manner.

Are there any safety concerns? Yes. Less than 3% of bats tested in NC have the rabies virus. However, it is important to remember that bats can become infected with rabies, so it is recommended to wear heavy gloves or use a shovel to handle the animal and prevent direct contact.

If an individual or pet has come into direct contact with the bat, contact the County Health Department to determine how to have the animal tested for rabies. If a bat has been found in a room where people have been sleeping, you must assume that exposure to rabies may have occurred.

Large amounts of bat guano can harbor microscopic fungus that can be inhaled when disturbing or cleaning up droppings. People can be exposed to histoplasmosis after breathing in the fungal spores from contaminated guano. It is recommended to wear a NIOSH-approved respirator while cleaning up or working around bat guano. See this [document](#) for information about how to safely clean and remove bat guano.

Non-lethal Options:

- See the [General Considerations for Handling Wildlife](#) document for general ways to prevent damage from wildlife.
- A bat found inside the living quarters of a home may be captured with a net or heavily gloved hand. Bats should not be released unless there has been no possibility of exposure to rabies.
- An alternative to capturing the animal would be to open a window, leave lights on (if at night) and seal other entrances to the room until the bat leaves.
- Exclusion

- In cases where bats inhabit the attic, walls, etc. of an occupied building, a WCA may use exclusion to solve the problem. See attached photos for examples of exclusion devices.
- New born bats or pups are non-volant (cannot fly) and are completely dependent on the adults for survival. When bats are raising pups, they cannot be excluded as removal of the adults would cause the young to die. May 1st through July 31st is considered the critical period for pup rearing. Individuals must be certain there are no pups before doing any exclusions.
- Install bat house when excluding bats from a building for an alternative roosting location
- Bats that are simply roosting on the outside of a building or on trees should be left undisturbed.

Lethal Options:

- Lethal measures may not be used to control bat problems unless special circumstances apply. Authorization for lethal take must be approved by the WRC and requires additional permitting.

