

Bat Facts

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Did you know?

- A single Little Brown bat can eat up to 1,200 insects per hour! This includes mosquitoes and many agricultural pests such as fall army worms, corn earworm, tobacco budworm, and cabbage loopers.
- Bat guano is an excellent fertilizer for your garden.
- Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight.

What is echolocation?

Bats utter ultrasonic cries that echo off of solid objects. Their facial configuration, along with the shape of their nose and large ears, assist in detecting the echoes. Bats rely on echolocation to detect prey and navigate in the dark.

How do bats catch their prey?

Bats use their mouths, wings and tail membrane to catch flying insects or to pick them off vegetation. All Florida bats eat insects, and some in the southern part of the state also eat fruit, nectar and pollen.

Where do bats live?

Bats live in buildings, bridges, caves, mines, rock crevices, tree bark, culverts, foliage and bat houses.

Which bats live in Florida?

Thirteen species of bats live year-round in Florida. Among the bats that are likely to inhabit a human-made bat house are Brazilian Free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*), Big Brown bats (*Eptesicus focus*), Southeastern bats (*Myotis austroriparius*), Evening bats (*Nycticeius humeralis*), and Florida Bonneted bats (*Eumops floridanus*).

Why are bat populations declining and how can we help?

Bat populations in North America are declining due to loss of habitat, disease (especially white-nose syndrome), use of harmful pesticides, disturbance of roost sites and their slow reproductive cycle. You can help local bat populations by installing a bat house, planting native vegetation that attracts non-pest insects, reducing use of insecticides, and providing a source for drinking water.

How do I attract bats to my bat house?

Bat Conservation International has conducted research to determine which characteristics bats prefer in their houses. Here are some details:

- Chamber should be at least 14 inches wide and 2 feet tall.
- Landing area beneath the entrance should be at least 3 inches long with a rough surface the bats can latch onto when they fly into the house.
- Roughen the back panel of the interior of the house so they can grab onto it with their toes.
- Caulk seams to keep out rainwater.
- Exterior color is important because it determines interior temperature. Paint exterior with 3 coats of flat, water-based, exterior-grade paint or stain in brown or gray (darker shades if area receives only a few hours of sunlight a day, lighter shades if in full sun).
- Internal temperature of house should be approximately 80° to 100°F, so orient and select paint color accordingly.
- Attach bat house to pole or building, rather than tree (which house predators).
- Install in an open area 20 feet away from trees and at least 12 feet from the ground.
- Select roost sites near fresh water and food sources.

References:

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April 2017