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Michigan State University Extension-Oakland County

# 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 bats.

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

When windows, doors, 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 reoccur. If bats are seen in the house each year, see #3 or #4.

## 2) A few bats roosting during the day (usually 3-4 or less)

Bats found roosting in a shaded window, behind shutters or under an awning, etc. 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 seen repeatedly in living quarters (2 or more times)

From May to September, but especially in May and August, bats seen repeatedly in living quarters are usually females and 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 homeowner's 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 one (1) hour after sunset or until bats are seen leaving. As an alternative, watch one (1) hour before sunrise. Watch only on warm, still evenings or mornings because bats will not leave the roost in inclement weather. Openings are usually found behind chimneys, under eaves, soffits, ventilators, and door and window frames. Once the openings are located, seal them between one-and-a-half to two (1½-2) 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 (wood, wood filler, caulk, foam, masonry, etc.) when convenient.

#### 4) Bats are seen in the living quarters of a home November through March

Occasionally 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 (mothballs, 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 animal. Poisons are justified only when 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.



For more information on bats and bat control: <http://www.batconservation.org/>

## Would you like additional information?

Additional information is available on-line. Please see [MSU Extension-Oakland County's publications](#) as well as [MSU Extension's Bulletin Office](#) on campus.

Please contact our office (248/858-0880) for assistance.

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