



# Bat Boxes

Bats are distinguished from all other mammals by their ability to fly. Their wings are folds of skin stretched between elongated arm and finger bones and the sides of the body. They fly rapidly in pursuit of insects, and migrate over long distances. Bats are nocturnal, and

depending on the species will roost in buildings, rock crevices, trees and vines either in groups or alone. In the winter bats perform a combination of migration and hibernation, some traveling farther than others. Breeding occurs just prior to hibernation and females gather in warm nursery roosts to give birth in May or June. There are nineteen species of bats in Canada most of which are insectivores and eat a variety of insects, preferable larger ones that are high in calories. Like all mammals, bats are susceptible to the rabies virus, however, despite popular belief the incidence in bats is quite low. There is limited information available regarding bat population sizes however their conservation is crucial. Human disturbances are a primary threat to bat populations, particularly during hibernation when bats are forced to expend their limited supply of energy. By building a bat box you will provide an ideal habitat for bats that are at risk of losing suitable roosting sites. Bats will be attracted to boxes that mimic natural sites and provide alternative housing away from buildings where bats are generally not welcomed. In addition, an increased presence of bats will help to control the number of insects around your home. Bat boxes are an easy way to contribute to bat conservation in Ontario.



Photo By: Betty Coutr

## Bat Box Tips

- It is best to leave the wood in a natural state.
- Attach bat box to a pole, tree or building, 12 to 20 feet above ground.
- Area should be free of obstacles for bats in flight. Avoid dense woods to minimize predation of the bats. Edges of clearings are suitable.
- Bat boxes should receive a minimum of 6 hours of sunlight daily. Avoid placing near bright artificial lighting.
- It is ideal to place the box near an available water source.

**PLACE AN ORDER ...** Assembled bat boxes are available for **\$25 each** by contacting:

**Terry Bradt—Bancroft Area Stewardship Council**  
Tel: 613-332-1705 or [hayton\\_bradt@sympatico.ca](mailto:hayton_bradt@sympatico.ca)

## BAT FACTS

- On average Canadian bats consume 50-100% of their body weight in insects on a summer evening.
- Most bats use echolocation ~ high pitched chirps bounce off objects in front of them ~ to locate prey, however they also have excellent eye sight.
- Bats are long lived creatures; in Canada one lived to be 35 years old.
- Most insectivorous bats capture prey in their wings or tail before transferring to their mouth.



**Box design by:**  
**Gerry Whyte**