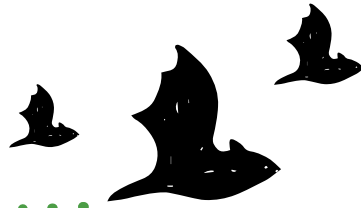


Become a Citizen Bat Scientist



One of the greatest limitations to the conservation of bats is a lack of information about their basic ecology and natural history. With the growing threat of white-nose syndrome, it is critical to collect baseline population and distribution data to evaluate the impact on bat populations as the disease spreads. Citizen scientists can play a key role in gathering information by collecting acoustic recordings (echolocation calls of bats), installing artificial roosts (bat houses), and monitoring summer roost activity (April 1–September 30).

SUMMER ROOST MONITORING BASICS:

During warmer months, many female bats will relocate from their winter habitat (hibernacula) and congregate into summer maternity roosts where they give birth and raise their pups. These roosts are commonly old buildings, barns or bat houses. Citizens can scout for locations of these roosts and then count the numbers that fly out around sunset during. It is best if volunteers visit the location and count once a month during the summer (April 1–September 30).

ACOUSTIC MONITORING BASICS:

All bat species in North America use echolocation to detect, pursue, and capture insect prey as they orient and navigate through the night sky. These calls are above the range of human hearing, but can be captured and recorded for future analysis using a hand-held acoustic device. After a training session on how to use the equipment, volunteers can conduct nighttime walking, driving, or water-based routes during the spring, summer or fall months when the bats are active. Surveys begin a half hour after sunset and run for at least an hour.

CURRENT PROGRAMS:

Bat Detective (www.batdetective.org) is an online citizen science project that allows volunteers from around the globe to help scientists identify bat calls from recordings taken at locations throughout the world. To participate, volunteers can visit the Bat Detective website, go through a tutorial, and then listen to recordings to decipher bat sounds from other night noises.

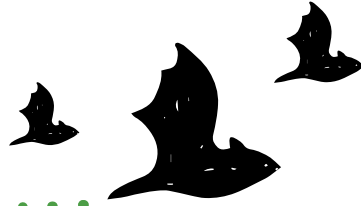
Canadian Neighborhood Bat Watch (www.batwatch.ca) enlists the participation of citizens to locate bat colonies and count the number of bats living in them. The information collected helps natural resource managers monitor and develop strategies to conserve these important animals. The Michigan Bat Monitoring Program (www.batconservation.org/help/citizenscience/) is a partnership between the Organization for Bat Conservation and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The program enlists the help of partner organizations that engage volunteers to collect acoustic recordings of bats across the state.

The Wisconsin DNR Bat Monitoring Program (www.wiatri.net/inventory/bats/) and the Wisconsin Citizen-Based Monitoring Network have opportunities to assist in monitoring bats. Volunteers can conduct acoustic and roost surveys across the state to help determine species distributions and population sizes.

*For more information about bats, visit www.batconservation.org
and www.fs.fed.us/global*



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EQUIPMENT:

Roost monitoring can be done visually and requires no special equipment, however acoustic surveys require specialized equipment. There are many models to choose from, including the popular Echo Meter Touch made by Wildlife Acoustics. This ultrasonic detector is easy to connect to an iPad or iPhone and comes with high-tech recording and analyzing software. More information: www.batconservation.org/shop/wildlife-acoustics-echo-meter-touch-bat-detector/

OTHER RELATED RESOURCES:

Gardening for Bats: <https://batconservation.org/help/bat-gardens/>

Bat House Building Guide: <https://batconservation.org/help/bat-houses/>

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