

Bat Facts

By Michelle Santoro, Bernards Township Animal Control Officer

Bats have a reputation of being spooky or even dangerous, but they are actually one of the most beneficial animals to people and they provide an essential contribution to our ecosystem. Bats do not get caught in people's hair. Bats that swoop near people are usually after insects such as mosquitoes.

Did you know that:

- A single little brown bat can eat 1200 mosquitoes in an hour.
- The little brown bat is the world's longest lived mammal for its size with a lifespan over 32 years.
- In October and November, the bats leave their summer roost and move to caves to hibernate for the winter. This is the best time to bat proof your house.
- Bats prepare for hibernation by putting on fat to last through the cold winter.
- Bats emerge again in April and May returning to the same location through their entire lifetime.
- Young bats (pups) are born in June or July and are fully grown within four weeks.
- The only way to keep a house free of bats is to block up the opening the bats are using.
- It is illegal for anyone, including animal control officers and exterminators, to kill bats.
- All evictions or exclusions should take place prior to mid-May or after mid-September to be sure the young are ready to fly.
- If a colony of bats is to be removed from a home, attic or barn, another place for the bats to roost such as a bat house should be considered.

All mammals, including bats, can get rabies, however less than one percent of all bats are infected with the virus. Just remember, NEVER handle a bat! If you are accidentally bitten or exposed, such as direct (bare skin) contact with a bat, make sure the bat is saved for examination. Immediately wash with soap and water and seek prompt medical advice and call Animal Control at the Bernards Township Health Department at 908-204-3066.



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