

BAT EXCLUSION GUIDELINES

Background: Four species of bats found in Ohio are state-endangered, including the federally endangered Indiana bat and the northern long-eared bat. Since the appearance of white-nose syndrome, bat populations have experienced declines of over 90%. Population declines of some species that roost in buildings may be as high as 96% to 99%. While all of Ohio's bat species are protected by law, the Division recognizes there may be times when human health or safety is at risk. For example, it is illegal to kill a bat for any reason unless a bite or potential exposure to rabies has occurred. Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 1501:31-15-03 provides additional opportunities to address human/wildlife coexistence issues, including the exclusion or eviction of unwanted bats from a man-made structure.

There are two restricted periods for bat exclusion in Ohio:

- From May 16th through July 31st, when 5 or more bats are present;
- From October 15th through March 31st, if any bats are present.

During these restricted periods, bats may only be excluded by first obtaining written permission from the chief of the Division of Wildlife or their designee. Written authorization will be considered when human health and safety are at risk or when nighttime temperatures exceed 40°F for the full 10-day forecast during the October restricted dates (see Requesting Written Permission During Restricted Periods below for additional information). The spring/summer restricted period is in place to protect bats and their flightless pups during the maternity period. Exclusions performed during this time may cause undue deaths of bats until pups can fly (August). Not only could the exclusion result in the death of pups, but frantic mothers attempting to get back to their young often find their way into living spaces. The fall/winter restricted period is put in place to protect hibernating bats. Bats that exit structures when temperatures drop below freezing may die if they cannot return to the same hibernaculum or shelter due to an exclusion device.

Allowable Exclusion Activities: If bats are entering the living space inside of a home (i.e., from attic access into a bedroom), these interior routes may be sealed or blocked at any time without a permit. However, unless otherwise approved by the Division, exterior routes may not be sealed without first installing an exclusion device. The ideal periods for bat exclusion are between April 1st and May 15th and August 1st through October 15th. The only allowable method of bat removal is bat exclusion. Bat exclusion is installing a device or materials for the purpose of removing bats from a structure. Exclusion devices or materials allow the one-way passage of bats out of a home or structure. Installing materials that close secondary access points while still allowing bats to enter and exit the structure through a main access point is not considered bat exclusion. Exclusion devices must be left in place for at least a week to be effective. Once all of the bats have been excluded from the structure, the device may be removed, and the entrance sealed within the same day to prevent bats from reentering.

It is illegal: To use glue traps to catch or kill bats; to use chemicals, toxicants, or foggers to kill bats; to seal all entry/exit points while bats are inside the structure; and to otherwise kill bats.

Bats may not be intentionally killed or harmed unless human rabies exposure is suspected.

Requesting Written Permission During Restricted Periods: Before applying for bat exclusion authorization from May 16th through July 31st, the property owner or designee must:

- Inspect the structure for bats;
- Perform two bat watches at the structure from ½ hour before until 1 hour after sunrise or from ½ hour before until ½ hour after sunset within seven days.
 - If five or more bats are observed during the inspection or first bat watch, additional watches are not required. Exclusion is not permitted without the Division's authorization.
 - If four or fewer bats are present or observed, bat exclusion can be performed without the Division's authorization.

The Division will consider immediate exclusion when human health and safety are at risk or when nighttime temperatures exceed 40°F for the full 10-day forecast during the October restricted dates. Applicants will typically receive a response to their request within a few days but no later than ten days after the Division receives it.

Who: Property owners or their agents and Division licensed/certified nuisance wild animal control operators may apply for bat exclusion authorization during the restricted periods. It is illegal for anyone who is not a licensed commercial nuisance wild animal control operator to receive compensation for wild animal control activities, including bat exclusions.

Rabies: Bats may not be killed or euthanized unless a bite or potential exposure to rabies has occurred. Contact your doctor if rabies is suspected in a bat or if a bite cannot be ruled out. Follow the instructions of the Ohio Department of Health or your local county health district for preserving and submitting the bat carcass for testing.

Please contact 1-800-WILDLIFE or email wildlife.batexclusion@dnr.ohio.gov for additional information on bat exclusion authorization.