

Bats

Many species of wildlife are found in Cook County. They are year round residents of our county and are for the most part are welcome visitors to our properties. Sometimes wildlife end-up in places that, are not safe for them or for the people or pets that may come in contact with them.

The first step in dealing with wildlife is to take steps to prevent many of the most common problems involved with wild animals around our homes. Sometimes a problem will need a solution when it cannot be prevented.

Bats are insectivorous meaning they eat a wide variety of insect life. They are usually seen flying around dusk, seeking insects and active until dawn. During the daylight hours bats will rest hanging upside down. They can maneuver into very tiny crevices where they are protected from both weather and predators. During the winter months they may be found nesting in natural shelters or buildings.

In Cook County bats have been associated with a strain of rabies. Of the many bats that are tested for rabies, only a small percentages are confirmed positive cases. Care should be taken to avoid contact with bats.

Helpful Hints

- *Bat on the ground:* when a bat is found on the ground it is probably sick, injured or a very young bat. The bat should not be handled. Some type of container should be used to place over the bat so it does not come into contact with adults, children or family pets. If the bat is deceased the same procedure should be used. You should call your local animal control agency to come and pick up the animal.

- *Bat in the bedroom:* If a bat is discovered in an adult's or child's bedroom, do not panic. Do not attempt to handle or catch the animal. The animal should be contained in the room and the door closed to secure the animal. You should contact your local animal control agency to come and capture the bat. You should also call your family physician and let them know who in the family has been exposed to the bat. If a family pet has been in the same room, you should contact your veterinarian. Bat bites may not be noticed by an adult or child and may be overlooked. It is better to err on the side of caution.
- *Bat in the house:* If a bat is discovered in the home but it has not bitten anyone attempt to take these steps. Do not attempt to handle or catch the bat. In a small area the bat may be flying but it is not trying to attack but locate a path back outside. Close the bat off, if possible, from the rest of the home. Open a window or door that will allow the bat an escape route to the outside. Give the bat time to fly out. Keep adults, children and pets out of the area. If this fails, call your local animal control agency for assistance in removing the animal.
- Bats usually rely on existing openings to enter a home and do not make their own entry holes. Small openings or narrow gaps around chimneys, loose siding and the connection between dormers

with a roof can provide access. Attics are a favored place for roosting.

- Bats may be discovered hanging from a porch ceiling or under eaves during the evening. The bats are resting between feeding flights and are probably at that location because the light of the porch is attracting insects.
- Sometimes it may be necessary to trap the animal for removal from an area. In this case you will need the assistance of a nuisance wildlife control operator to trap and remove the animal. There is usually a fee associated with this service.
- In Illinois, bats are protected by law. If an individual wants to trap a bat you will need to call the Illinois Department of Natural Resources District Wildlife Biologist to request an animal removal permit. This type of permit comes with very specific regulations that you as the permitted trapper must follow.
- For additional information check the website University of Illinois Extension – Living With Wildlife in Illinois (<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/wildlife>)



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