

So you have bats in your building and want to get rid of them? If you have many bats roosting in your house, it is likely a maternity colony, where groups of adult females roost together to give birth and raise their young. Maternity roosts must be warm to promote growth of the young bat pups, which is why buildings and attics are popular roost sites for species such as the little brown bat.

Fortunately, public health concerns related to bats (rabies and histoplasmosis) in other parts of the country are largely unknown in Alaska. Rabies virus is NOT well-established among bat populations in Alaska. Since 1973 the Alaska State Virology Laboratory and Alaska Department of Fish and Game have evaluated more than 200 bat carcasses. Only five bats – all in Southeast – were infected with rabies, and in none of these instances was the disease transmitted to a human. Histoplasmosis, a fungal respiratory disease that can be transmitted by bat guano (feces), has NOT been found in Alaska.

Although human health is not generally at risk from bats in Alaska, noise and/or odors from large colonies of bats can become a nuisance. If you have resident bats, convincing them to leave can be difficult. Unfortunately, neither moth balls nor the ultrasonic devices advertised as pest deterrents work. Trapping and relocating bats does not work because the bats will simply return. Using pesticides and poisons on bats is illegal and ineffective – more bats will simply move in to take their place. It also greatly increases the likelihood of bats dying within your building, where the decaying carcasses can cause problems with odor and potentially attract other pests. It also increases the chance of bats coming into contact with you and your pets. Exclusion is the ONLY effective solution for permanently removing bats from buildings.

There are two options for ridding yourself of roosting bats through exclusion: you can call a licensed professional, or you can follow the “do-it-yourself” approach. Either way, here in Alaska you should wait until at least late September to exclude bats, when pups are old enough to forage on their own and most bats will have left the roost for the winter.

Both professional and DIY bat exclusion involve the same series of steps:

1. Examine the building for potential entrances. Common entrance spots include chimneys, vents, soffits, joists, and corners. Check for holes with staining and/or guano (bat droppings). The presence of guano on walls, floors, or the ground usually indicates an entrance is present somewhere above. Try to identify as many potential entrance holes as possible.
2. Conduct a little "stakeout" of your place starting at dusk. Watch potential entrances to try and see where bats are exiting your building.
3. If you find an active entrance, watch it for a few evenings to get an estimate of the number of bats.
4. Once you've determined the locations of entrances, cover each with a one-way bat exclusion device. This is a device that allows bats to leave the building, but not return.
5. Seal all other openings along your roof-line, attic, or other areas near exclusion devices.
6. Leave your bat exclusion devices in place for a minimum of seven days to make sure all the bats have left.
7. You can now remove the exclusion devices and permanently seal the entrances.

For information on constructing one-way bat exclusion devices see:

- [Exclusion Guidelines](#) (from Bat Conservation International)
- [Yukon Bats](#) (from the Yukon Government)

We strongly recommend hiring a professional with experience in the matter. The professionals are licensed; they know how to get the bats out, and how to seal up your place to keep them out. They can also keep you from accidentally straying outside of Alaska statutes.

Three options for professional pest control in Alaska (possessing Wild Animal Control Licenses) are:

- Nuisance Wildlife Management in Anchorage and Mat-Su (Anchorage: 907-333-9453; Mat-Su: 907-373-9953; website: <http://www.nuisancewildlifemanagement.com/>)
- Alaska Affordable Pest in Anchorage and surrounding areas (phone:907-770-5635: cell: 907-301-5877; website: <http://alaskaaffordablepestcontrol.com/>)
- Varmint Gone LLC in Wasilla (service in Anchorage and Mat-Su Boroughs) (phone: 907-290-3099; website: <https://anchorage.varmintgone.com>)

This is not an official endorsement of any company or of the quality of their services: they are simply the three companies licensed to do bat removal work in Alaska (as of 2020).

Finally, if you have bats roosting in a building, a bat house is unlikely to draw them away from their cozy home. However, if they are properly excluded from your building, having a bat house or two available may prevent them from looking for another way back inside. Bats are known to use bat houses in Interior and Southcentral Alaska, but do not appear to use them in Southeast Alaska. Learn more about bat houses and how to build them at Bat Conservation International [Bat Houses](#).

Locating maternity roost sites is an important first step toward monitoring summer bat populations. Once a roost has been located, bats can be counted as they emerge in the evening to go forage. In response to the recent arrival of [White-nose Syndrome](#) (WNS) [to Washington](#), the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is conducting maternity roost monitoring at select roosts. Below is information on how you can help:

- **Report a roost:** If you know the location of a bat roost that is regularly used by more than one bat, please complete the online [Bat Report Form](#).
- **Monitor a roost:** Help document maternity colony size and timing of reproduction by volunteering to count bats as they emerge from their roost in the evening. To get involved in the program, contact Katie Christie at katie.christie@alaska.gov in Southcentral and Interior Alaska or Karen Blejwas in Southeast Alaska at karen.blejwas@alaska.gov.
- **Bat house:** To report bat use of a bat house, please complete the online [Bat Report Form](#).