

So you have bats in your building and want to get rid of them? There is little reason to evict bats where they are not causing a nuisance. However, sometimes noise and/or odors from large colonies of bats can become a nuisance. If you have many bats roosting in your house, it is likely that you have a “nursery roost” or maternity colony; females with young roost together in large groups, but males and non-pregnant females tend to roost singly or in small groups. Unfortunately, we don't yet know whether bats in Interior, Western, and South-central Alaska are year round residents (hibernating overwinter in their summer roosts), or if they migrate south to hibernate in mines, caves, or forests with survivable climates. If Alaskan bats all migrated during the winter, you could wait until fall and simply seal all the small potential entrances around your roof line. However, if Alaskan bats turn out to hibernate in place, you may very well wind up sealing a bunch of bats inside your house to slowly rot away over the winter. That can be a bigger problem than having roosting bats in the first place, and something we all want to avoid.

If you have resident bats, convincing them to leave can be difficult. Unfortunately, neither moth balls nor the ultrasonic devices touted to be pest deterrents work. Trapping and relocating bats doesn't work because they will simply return. Using pesticides and poisons on bats is illegal, and greatly increases the likelihood of having bats die within your building and the increases the chance of bats coming into contact with people and pets. And having dead animals decaying within your building can lead to other problems including odor and attracting others pests.

Eradication (killing) of bats is governed by Alaska statute, and under many cases can actually be illegal in Alaska. Bats are legally classified as game. See AS 16.05.940(19). There are no longer regulations concerning season and bag limits. They are, therefore, “unclassified game” under 5 AAC 92.990(a)(43). There used to be seasons and bag limits on them in 5 AAC 85.070, but the BOARD OF GAME deleted those several years ago. Instead, the Board now relies on 5 AAC 92.420, allowing people to get licensed to take nuisance wildlife. Unless taken in compliance with this regulation, or in defense of life or property, taking bats is unlawful and potentially a class A misdemeanor under AS 16.05.920. I've appended “Defense of Life and Property” regulations below.

However, killing bats is not the only option: it may cause further harm to the property, and is not a permanent solution in itself. 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 mid-August to exclude bats to insure that any baby bats are out foraging with the females, not waiting inside for their mothers to return and nurse. Otherwise, you will have baby bats dying inside your building. Both professional and DIY bat exclusion involve the same series of steps. Conduct a little "stakeout" of your place from dusk into nightfall. Look for bats flying around, and try to

trace their flight lines to and from your building. If they are roosting in there you may well be able to find where their entrance/s is/are. If you find an entrance, watch it for a few evenings to get a sense for the numbers of bats roosting there, what their movement patterns are, and what proportion of “your” bats does each entrance account for. Ideally you’ll want to know where all the entrances or roosts in your building are before you start. Once you’ve determined the locations of all the entrances/roosts, you’ll cover each with a “one-way bat valve,” a device that allows bats to leave the building, but not return.

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

<http://batcon.net/index.php/bats-a-people/bats-in-buildings/subcategory/69.html>

and

<http://www.batcone.com/>

and

the last few pages of this brochure from Environment Yukon

http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/mapspublications/documents/yukonbats_brochure.pdf.

You'll also want to seal any other small openings along your roof-line, attic, or other areas near the old entrance(s) where bats might want to roost: when the bats return and can't get in, they will be quite distressed and will search all over for another way in. You'll want to leave your “bat-valves” in place for a minimum of seven days to make sure all the bats have gone outside. At that point it is safe to permanently seal up all the bat entrances.

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.

Two options for professional pest control in South-central Alaska (possessing Wild Animal Control Licenses) are Robert Doran of Nuisance Wildlife Management (phone: 907-373-9953; cell: 907-333-9453; website: <http://www.nuisancewildlifemanagement.com/>), and Warren Brown of Alaska Affordable Pest in Anchorage (phone:907-770-5635; cell: 907-301-5877; website: <http://alaskaaffordablepestcontrol.com/>).

This is not an official endorsement of either company nor of the quality of their services: they are simply the two companies licensed to do bat removal work in Southcentral Alaska (as of 2012).

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. We have some general info for bat houses in Alaska on our website www.akbats.net . We can also provide additional bat-house information if you're interested.

Depending on what you decide to "do" about "your" bats this summer, your little colony may be of interest to us as part of an ongoing study on bat hibernation and migration that is just beginning. We know of only a handful of summer roosts in South Central Alaska; most are in buildings and a few are in abandoned mines. We plan on tracking these summer colonies through the end of autumn to determine if and when the bats leave or if they remain in place over winter. Let us know if you are interested in having your building included in this study.

I hope this helps. If you have any more questions don't hesitate to call or send an email. Also please keep us posted on how you choose to resolve your "bat issue" and what your final outcome is.

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5 AAC 92.410. Taking game in defense of life or property

(a) Nothing in [5 AAC](#) prohibits a person from taking game in defense of life or property if

- (1) the necessity for the taking is not brought about by harassment or provocation of the animal, or by an unreasonable invasion of the animal's habitat;
- (2) the necessity for the taking is not brought about by the improper disposal of garbage or a similar attractive nuisance; and
- (3) all other practicable means to protect life and property are exhausted before the game is taken.

(b) Game taken in defense of life or property is the property of the state. A person taking such game shall immediately salvage the meat or, in the case of a black bear, wolf, wolverine, or coyote, shall salvage the hide and shall immediately surrender the salvaged meat or hide to the department. In the case of a brown bear, the hide and skull must be immediately delivered to the department. A surrendered hide and skull of a bear must be completely removed from the carcass. A surrendered bear hide must include attached claws. A person taking game under this section shall notify the department of the taking immediately, and within 15 days after the taking shall submit to the department a completed questionnaire concerning the circumstances of the taking.

(c) As used in this section, "property" means

- (1) a dwelling, permanent or temporary;
- (2) an aircraft, boat, automobile, or other conveyance;
- (3) a domesticated animal;
- (4) other property of substantial value necessary for the livelihood or survival of the owner.