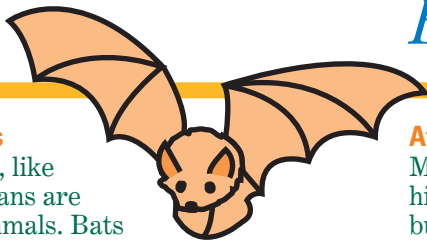




# Beneficial Bats

## Backyard Habitat for Wildlife



### Bat Facts

- Bats, like humans are mammals. Bats are the only mammals that can fly.
- Female bats usually give birth to one young or pup per year.
- Bats are nocturnal—active at night, resting during the day.
- Bats have excellent eyesight, and are never “Blind as a bat!” To find their way around in the dark, they use echolocation or a built in sonar.
- Bats can weigh as little as two grams (less than 1/10 of an ounce) or as much as two pounds.

### Bat Food

All southeastern bats found in the United States feed exclusively on insects (the Jamaican fruit-eating bat eats insects and fruit). A bat feasting on moths, mosquitos, beetles and other insects can eat one half of its body weight in one night! Backyard bats will help reduce insect pests that bother you and your garden plants. A typical summer colony of 100 bats feeding 200 days will consume more than 2200 pounds of insects or approximately 600,000,000 bugs!

### Bats of the Southeast

- Big Brown Bat
- Silver-haired Bat
- Eastern Red Bat
- Hoary Bat
- Northern Yellow Bat
- Seminole Bat
- Southeastern Bat
- Grey Bat\*
- Eastern Small-footed Bat
- Little Brown Bat
- Northern Long-eared Bat
- Indiana Bat\*
- Evening Bat
- Eastern Pipistrelle Bat
- Rafinesque’s Big-eared Bat
- Virginia Big-eared Bat
- Ozark Big-eared Bat
- Florida Mastiff Bat
- Pallas’ Mastiff Bat
- Brazilian Free-tailed Bat
- Jamaican Fruit-eating Bat

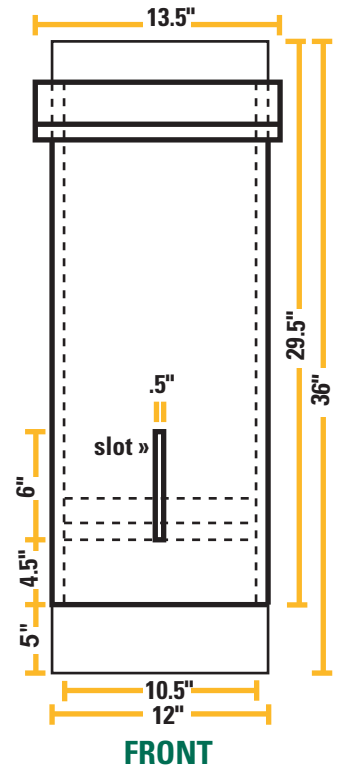
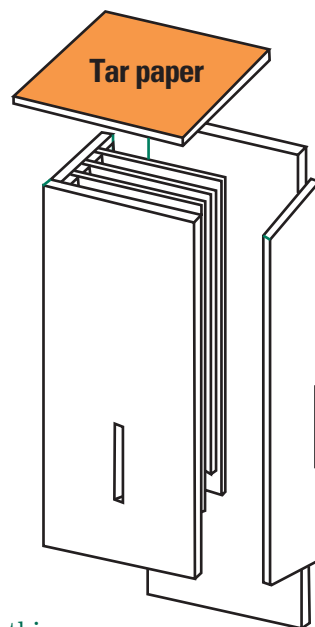
\*endangered species

### Attracting Bats

Most eastern bats spend the winter hibernating in caves and move to trees or buildings for the summer. Some however, spend all year in caves and others (tree bats) seldom see a cave, preferring to roost in trees during the warm summers and tree hollows for the cool winters.

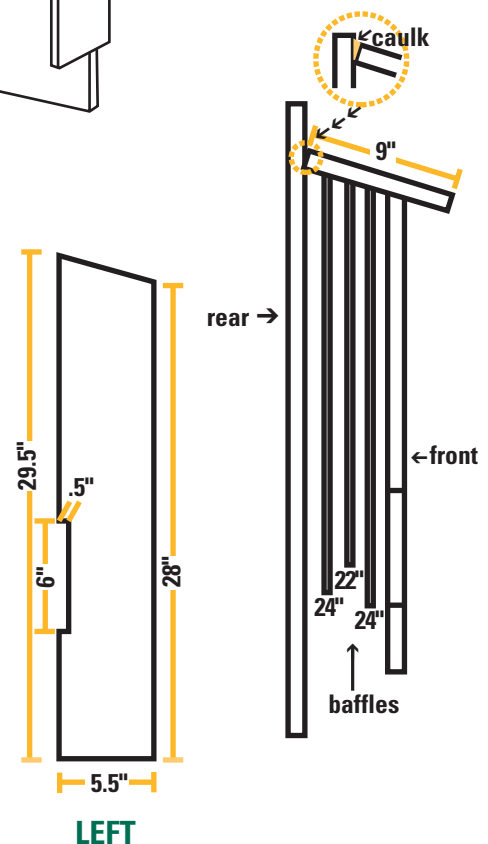
As hollow trees are cut down, bat boxes, such as the one shown here, are needed for bats to survive. This is especially true in April to August when females are looking for safe and quiet places to give birth and raise their pups. Both the mothers and newborns are very sensitive to being disturbed.

Install a bat box anytime but late winter and early spring is best. Hang the box at least 10 feet off the ground, in a spot where it can receive six hours of morning sun. About 100 bats can live in this bat box.



### Building a Bat House

- Using CDX plywood or cedar, cut all pieces to size.
- To give the bats something to cling to, space shallow saw kerfs or knife gouges about 1" apart on the plywood baffles or staple plastic (not metal) screening instead.
- Screw 3/4" x 1" spacer strips on side panels to make slots for the baffles.
- Attach front panel to sides. Add roof. Glue baffle edges and drop into slots. Attach back panel and caulk.
- Darken with waterbase stain. Tack or staple tar paper to roof of the box to increase heat absorption.



## Where to place your bat house.

In northwestern states, bat houses need at least six to eight hours of direct sun daily. It is very important for nursery colonies to raise their young under warm conditions. You should even paint your bat house black to absorb more heat. Use a non-toxic, latex paint for your house and only paint the outside. Remember that where you mount your bat house plays a major role in the internal temperature. Houses can be mounted on such structures as poles, sides of buildings and tall trees without obstructions. Houses placed on poles and structures tend to become occupied quicker than houses placed on trees. Houses should face south to southeast to take advantage of the morning sun. Your bat house should be mounted at least 15 feet above the ground, the higher the house the greater the chance of attracting bats. Bats return from migration and awaken from hibernation as early as March in most of the U.S., but stay active year-round in the extreme southern U.S. They will be abundant through out the summer and into late fall. Most houses used by bats are occupied in the first 1 to 6 months (during the first summer the bat house was erected). If bats do not roost in your house by the end of the second summer, move the house to another location.

## What types of bats can I expect to see in my bat house in the Northwestern states?

Some of the most common bat species to occupy bat houses in northwestern states are as followed: pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) a large pale colored bat with large ears, little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*), Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), and Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*), all of which are light to dark brown in color. (From: [www.bat-houses.org](http://www.bat-houses.org))

## Big Brown Bat



This as of yet unnamed animal ambassador for the Humboldt Wildlife Care Center was found as a very young juvenile after the demolition of the attic in which his colony was living. He was brought to HWCC by a construction worker. Since he has never learned to hunt on the wing, he is not releasable. He loves mealworms, and usually wakes up to be fed during programs. A wild Big Brown Bat will eat 1,000 mosquitoes an hour!

To find out more, visit HWCC at [www.humwild.org](http://www.humwild.org)

# Humboldt



Wildlife Care Center