



Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project

Homes for Bats Program

Have you ever wanted to build a bat house for your property to help move a colony out of your attic, or to attract bats to eat mosquitoes? We want to help you. Take advantage of this opportunity to get the materials paid for!

The Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project is encouraging the installation of bat houses by paying for the cost of materials. In return, the participant builds, installs and monitors the bat house and joins our wildlife stewardship program.

The goal of this project is to provide more roosting habitat for bats, learn about the best bat house designs and placements, and encourage the monitoring of bat populations on the Sunshine Coast.



HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

There are two ways to join the Homes for Bats Program:

1. Install Your Own Bat Box

FROM A KIT – Buy a bat box construction kit from the Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project for \$40. The kit includes all the materials you will need along with step-by-step construction instructions.

READY-MADE – Buy one of our ready-made bat houses for \$40.

FROM SCRATCH – Build your own bat house from scratch using one of the templates provided on our website (www.coastwildlife.ca).

Once your bat house is installed, send us a photo, we will refund the cost of the kit or construction materials to a maximum of \$40 per bat box. Or you can choose to donate the cost of the kit back to the Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project to support further wildlife stewardship activities. This program will run for as long as funding remains.

2. Sponsor a Bat Box

For \$40 you can sponsor a bat box. We will build it and put it up in a high priority conservation spot or in your favourite hiking area. We will give you directions and a GPS coordinate, and you can help us monitor bat populations by visiting your bat box to check whether bats have moved in.

WHERE SHOULD I PUT MY BAT HOUSE?

Bat houses should be placed as high up as possible, at least 12 feet (4 meters), in an open area that gets plenty of sun, south or south-east facing, and without clutter of trees, buildings, or other objects nearby. They can be mounted on the sides of buildings such as houses, barns, sheds, or garages, or on a metal pole or wooden post. Bat houses mounted on trees or metal siding are seldom used.

If you would like some assistance with deciding where to put your bat house or to install your bat house, please contact us and we will come to your home to assist you if we are able to.



Please follow these best practices for bat house installation:

Sun Exposure

Temperature is one of the controlling factors of a successful bat house. Houses should be placed to be south or south-east facing and should receive at least 10 hours of sunlight; the more sun the better.

Height

It is best to place your bat house as high up as possible, away from the reach of cats and other predators. All bat houses should be mounted at least 12 feet (4 meters) above ground; 17-20 feet (5-6m) is best.

Cover

Ideally, there should be cover over the bat-house to protect from rain and the elements. However, the entrance should be uncluttered so the bats can easily fly into the house. Ideally, bat houses should be placed at least 20-23 feet (6-7 meters) from branches, wires or other clutter so that bats can easily fly in and are free from aerial predators.

Protection from Predators

Houses mounted on sides of buildings or on metal poles provide the best protection from predators. Maintain an uncluttered entrance around the bat house. Metal predator guards may be helpful, especially on wooden poles, to prevent predator attack. Bat houses should not be lit by bright lights.

Location

Most nursery colonies of bats choose roosts within 400 m of water, preferably a stream, river or lake. Greatest bat house success has been achieved in areas of diverse habitat, especially where there is a mixture of varied agricultural use and natural vegetation. Bats may find houses more quickly if the houses are situated along forest or water edges where bats tend to fly.

Timing of Installation

Bat houses can be installed at any time of the year, but are more likely to be used during their first summer if installed before the bats return in spring. When using bat houses in conjunction with excluding a colony from a building, install the bat houses at least two to six weeks before the actual eviction.

Mounting

On Buildings

Wood or stone buildings with proper solar exposure are excellent choices, and locations under the eaves often have been successful. If you choose a simple single-chamber bat house, it must be mounted on a heated building.



On Poles

Bat houses are very successful when they are mounted on poles or posts in an open area. Posts should be at least 20 feet long (so with 4 feet buried in the ground, that would be 16 feet high). Metal poles can be used or wooden posts with the bottoms treated and/or in cement.

Mounting two bat houses back to back on poles is ideal. Place houses $\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart and cover both with a galvanized metal roof to protect the center roosting space from rain.





It is essential that you determine where underground gas lines are before you dig. For information, please call Fortis BC ONE CALL at 1-800-474-6886 to request underground line information.

Once bat-houses are placed on a post, they are very heavy so installation can be challenging. A work party or small machinery may be required. Contact us to see if we can help.



WHAT TYPES OF BAT HOUSES CAN I BUILD?

The Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project promotes bat house designs that have been tested for decades as well as new innovative approaches. Bat house designs may include a single chamber bat box, a multi-chamber nursery box, a rocket box, or an "Uncle George" design. Downloadable templates and construction instructions for all designs are available on our website at www.coastwildlife.ca or contact us to have us send you the designs by mail.

	<p>Single Chamber Bat Box: Simple single chamber bat boxes are tall, rectangular compartments with one chamber, a landing strip, and an open bottom. Small bat-boxes are usually 40 cm wide and 60 cm high. They have only one chamber, providing a roost space for up to 50 bats. They do not support large colonies and <u>must be mounted on heated buildings</u>.</p>
	<p>Nursery Box: The multiple-chambered nursery boxes offer more roosting space and the ability of bats to move with changes in temperature. Multiple-chambered bat boxes can hold over 200 bats, and are a more successful design for BC. A good set-up, especially for a large colony of bats, is to put two multi-chambered bat boxes back to back on a post.</p>
	<p>Rocket Box: Rocket boxes are very successful. They are usually 1 m tall, and contain concentric roosting chambers of 20 mm (3/4") around a 4 by 4 post. By increasing the number of square roosting chambers, the rocket box becomes wider and can house more bats. This bat house style is usually built around a post, so installation simply requires fixing the post in the ground. These structures can also be adapted to be put on buildings. This bat house style has been extremely successful on the coast of BC, especially for Yuma myotis, a common local bat species.</p>
	<p>Uncle George: The relatively new "Uncle George" design is being experimented with in Oregon and British Columbia. This design has slats at various angles, rather than just vertically as in a typical nursery box. A study in Washington found that this design attracted bats more quickly than nursery boxes or rocket boxes. To date, however, no maternity colonies have occupied this style of bat house.</p>

BAT HOUSE COLOUR: No matter which bat house design you choose, please ensure that the house is **painted or stained black or dark brown to absorb maximum heat**. Apply three coats of exterior grade, water-based paint or stain.