

Their Unique Adaptations

Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight. A thin membrane covers a set of fingers, which together, act as wings.



Credit: Arizona State Parks

Bats are nocturnal: they sleep during the day and are active at night.

They are not blind but they rely on their ears more than their eyes to find food and navigate the night skies. Using echolocation (high-frequency sound waves bouncing off objects), bats determine the shape, distance and size of the objects around them.



Credit: Outcrop Communications

Bats are long-living and reproduce very slowly. Many bat species only produce one pup per year. This makes them sensitive to population decline.

Bats are warm-blooded and can withstand a wide range of body temperatures. In the summer, they rely on the sun to warm up their roosts and promote rapid growth of young bats. On cold days, in both summer and winter, their body temperature drops as they enter a state of torpor (deep sleep and low metabolic rate) to save energy.

White-nose Syndrome

White-nose syndrome is named for a distinctive white fungus on a bat's muzzle and wings. Since 2006, millions of hibernating bats have died of this disease in the eastern parts of Canada and the United States. White-nose syndrome has not been reported in the NWT but it may eventually spread north. It is not thought to be a human health issue.

White-nose syndrome is most commonly spread from bat to bat but it can be spread from cave to cave on boots, equipment and clothing.

You can help by staying out of caves that may contain bats.



Photo credit: Ryan von Linden/New York Department of Environmental Conservation

If you see a bat:

- **Do not handle it**
- **Take a photo if you can**
- **For advice on dealing with bats in buildings, go to www.batcon.org**

For more information, contact your regional ENR office or call (867) 920-6327

**Help us monitor bats!
Report all bat observations to
WILDLIFEBS@gov.nt.ca**

Bats of the Northwest Territories



Bats in the Northwest Territories

There are approximately 1200 species of bats world-wide — more than one-fifth of the entire world's mammal species.

In the NWT, only three species of bats were known before 2006. Thanks to research and public input, there are now seven confirmed species and one suspected for a total of eight.



Photo credit: J. M. Wilson/GNWT

All bats in the NWT eat insects. They can consume their own body weight in insects each night. One little brown myotis can eat as many as 600 mosquito-sized insects in one hour!

In the summer, NWT bats roost (rest) in tree hollows, under tree bark, among the leaves of trees, in caves, in rock crevices and in buildings.

In the winter, some NWT bat species migrate south to warmer areas. Other species stay and hibernate in caves or deep crevices.



Photo credit: J. M. Wilson/GNWT



Little Brown Myotis

Myotis lucifugus

The little brown myotis is the most common bat in the NWT. It is known to hibernate here. This bat often lives in colonies in buildings but also roosts in trees and rock crevices.

Wingspan: 22 to 27 cm

Weight: 8 to 9 grams

Lifespan: Up to 36 years

Rank: May be at risk in the NWT

Status:

Endangered in Canada



Photo credit: Michael Durham/Bat Conservation International (BCI)



Northern Myotis

Myotis septentrionalis

The northern myotis looks similar to a little brown myotis but its ears are longer. This bat searches for its prey in more cluttered areas like forest edges and overgrown trails. Sometimes it catches insects sitting on twigs or leaves.

Wingspan: 23 to 26 cm

Weight: 7 to 8 grams

Lifespan: About 20 years

Rank: May be at risk in the NWT

Status:

Endangered in Canada



Photo credit: J. Scott Altenbach



Long-eared Myotis

Myotis evotis

The long-eared myotis is characterized by its distinctive long black ears. Its relatively quiet echolocation calls are good for sneaking up on prey and moving through cluttered areas.

Wingspan: 25 to 29 cm

Weight: 7 grams

Lifespan: Up to 22 years

Rank: May be at risk in the NWT



Photo credit: J. Scott Altenbach



Long-legged Myotis

Myotis volans

The long-legged myotis looks very similar to a little brown myotis and is typically dark brown. It is a bat that lives primarily in coniferous forests.

Wingspan: 25 to 27 cm

Weight: 8 grams

Lifespan: Up to 21 years

Rank: May be at risk in the NWT



Photo credit: Michael Durham/BCI



Big Brown Bat

Eptesicus fuscus

The big brown bat is a high flier and is easy to spot early in the night. This species lives in a variety of habitats and roosts in trees, rock crevices and buildings.

Wingspan: 32 to 39 cm

Weight: 18 to 19 grams

Lifespan: 20 years

Rank: Undetermined in the NWT



Photo credit: Cori Lausen



Silver-haired Bat

Lasionycteris noctivagans

The silver-haired bat has black wings and dark, silver-tipped hair. It is thought this species migrates south for the winter.

Wingspan: 27 to 31 cm

Weight: 11 grams

Lifespan: Up to 12 years

Rank: Undetermined in the NWT



Photo credit: Michael Durham/BCI



Hoary Bat

Lasiurus cinereus

The hoary bat, named for the frosted appearance of its fur, roosts among the leaves and needles of trees. It is the largest bat in Canada and migrates south for the winter.

Wingspan: 34 to 41 cm

Weight: 28 grams

Lifespan: Up to 12 years

Rank: Undetermined in the NWT



Photo credit: Michael Durham/BCI



Eastern Red Bat

Lasiurus borealis

The eastern red bat's distinctive orange to red colouring stands out among other bats. This bat migrates south for the winter. Its unique ultrasound has been recorded in the NWT but there have been no captures.

Wingspan: 22 to 33 cm

Weight: 13 grams

Lifespan: About 12 years

Rank: Presence expected in the NWT



Photo credit: Merlin D. Tuttle/BCI

Cover photo credits:
Long-eared myotis - Michael Durham/BCI
Little brown myotis - Merlin D. Tuttle/BCI
Little brown myotis - Michael Durham/BCI

Note: Maps are based on confirmed observations and will change as new information becomes available.