Why protect bats?

Bats are on the decline with 50% of American bat species in severe decline or already listed as Endangered. Their loss jeopardizes entire ecosystems.

Bats eat large quantities of insects such as mosquitoes, beetles, moths, grasshoppers, and locusts. Many of these insects are harmful to crops, forests and humans. Without the benefit of insect-eating bats, farmers would have to apply more pesticides to protect their crops and more insects could need to be used to protect the public from disease carrying mosquitoes.

Bats reproduce at a very slow rate. Most species in the Nevada give birth to and nurse only one pup per year.

Bats avoid contact with humans and other animals that could potentially harm them. Consequently less than half of one percent of bats contract rabies. They normally only bite out of self defense and should not be handled.

CREATE BAT HABITAT

- Leave older and dead trees for roost sites
- Provide clear, open water in ditches, ponds and lakes
- Construct backyard ponds and stock tanks with at least a seven foot length so bats can take water on the wing
- Avoid use of pesticides. This kills their food items and pups are very sensitive to pesticides
- Avoid caves, mines or abandoned buildings where bats may have maternity roosts or where they are hibernating. If you wake a hibernating bat it could die from starvation
- Provide and maintain hedge rows, windbreaks, and trees along forest edges
- Bridges can provide excellent summer roost habitat. When bridges are constructed or rebuilt, bat specifications can be incorporated

A Local Colony

A large colony of Mexican Free-tailed bats has adopted a bridge in Reno as their summer roost where they can give birth to their pups. This is one of the largest known colonies of bats in the state. Every summer these bats take up residence under this bridge, which spans the Truckee River. The females give birth to only one pup per year and nurse their young for several weeks. The colony consists of approximately 100,000 bats including those born here every year. These bats do not hibernate in Nevada but fly as far as Mexico for the winter to feed on insects. Each bat can eat at least 1000 small insects per night and the entire colony consumes approximately 75 tons of night-flying insects in Nevada during the summer.

Habitat Conservation

Although the spotted bat is Nevada’s only bat species listed as “Threatened”, several species are declining in number and some at a rapid pace. Habitat destruction, disturbance at hibernation and maternity colonies, and the use of pesticides all have been responsible for this decline.

Habitat enhancements for bats are easy and inexpensive. These aerial airlifts eat thousands of insects a night many of which are forest and crop pests. Many of the bats in Nevada feed on mosquitoes that can carry diseases such as the West Nile Virus.

Lake Mead

Lake Mead is a National Recreation Area and provides excellent habitat for bats. Two species of bats are known to roost in the area, the Pallid Bat and the Long-Eared Bat. The Long-Eared Bat is the most common species found in the area. The Pallid Bat is less common and is sometimes found in the area.

NEVADA BATS

Our Aerial Allies

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Nevada Bat Conservation

Twenty three native species of bats in Nevada depend on humans for protection and habitat conservation. The Nevada Bat Working Group is made up of state, federal, and private wildlife scientists dedicated to the preservation, protection, management and restoration of Nevada’s bat fauna. This group of dedicated people put together the first bat conservation plan in the western U.S. This plan outlines life history of each of the 23 species of bats that occur in Nevada, in addition to conservation measures for certain habitats and water, bridge construction for bats, and preservation measures. Check for a copy of the plan at libraries across the state. An educational video on bats in Nevada will also be available in the near future.

Nevada Department of Wildlife's Wildlife Preservation Bureau is currently conducting research on all bat species in Nevada. Radio telemetry is now small enough for bats to carry on their backs. Radio telemetry, bat detectors and night vision equipment allow biologists to study bats and learn more about important foraging, hibernating and roosting locations. These tools also help biologists document habitat use, identify breeding sites, determine the far species migrate, and observe rarely documented behavior.
**Bats of Nevada**

**LONG-EARED MYOTIS** (Scott Altenbach) This bat is very long lived with a record of 22 years. The long-eared Myotis was named for its jet black ears which measure nearly half of its total body length. It is found in almost all of Nevada’s counties and prefers forested habitats.

**PALLID BAT** (Scott Altenbach) One of the lightest color bats in Nevada can be pure white to buff color. This bat often scoops up large prey on the ground including centipedes and scorpions. The Pallid is common in arid habitats with rocky outcroppings.

**TOWNSEND’S BIG-EARED BAT** (John Geibhardt) These big-eared bats give birth to one large pup, which is 25% of the size of its mother. They are found in desert habitat, Pinion Juniper up to coniferous deciduous forest and live up to 15 years.

**WESTERN PIPISTRELLE BAT** (Scott Altenbach) One of the smallest bats in the U.S. with a wingspan of 7-9 inches. The Pipistrelle has the slowest and weakest flight of all bats and is often active before sunset and after dawn. This bat can consume 20% of its body weight during each feeding period.

**YUMA BAT** (Scott Altenbach) The Yuma bat has a preference for habitat with open water, and is often found in treeless areas. The Yuma bat commonly forages above the surface of the water. Females can give birth the summer following their own birth.

**YELLOW BAT** (Jason Williams) These bats use trees and leafy vegetation in which to roost and hunt insects. In the Las Vegas area they utilize palm trees for roosting and hibernation.

**SILVER-HAIRED BAT** (Scott Altenbach) One of the slowest flying bats in North America and found in forested areas normally roosting under bark. Uncommon throughout most of the state.

**HOARY BAT** (Scott Altenbach) This tree dwelling species is the most widespread of all bats in North America including Canada, South America, Hawaii, Iceland, Bermuda and the Dominican Republic. Northern populations make long seasonal migrations.

**SPOTTED BAT** (Scott Altenbach) The spotted bat is threatened in Nevada. It is normally found singly or in small colonies. This strikingly colored bat is closely associated with rock cliffs and has only one pup.

Nevada is home to 23 different species of bats.

Bats eat large quantities of insects such as mosquitoes, beetles, moths, grasshoppers, and locusts.