

Bat Habitat Inspection and Bat Proofing in Recreational Camps

Camps are usually located in areas that are prime habitat for bats and other wildlife. The type of construction of camp buildings may be favourable to roosting bats leading to interaction between the animals and human occupants. Rabies exposure is possible if there is a bite from or improper handling of infected bat. Abnormal behaviour includes being on the ground, landing on a person, and flying during the daylight hours. Bats infected with rabies may be mistaken for injured animals if they are found flopping around on the ground. Occasionally there is no obvious abnormal behaviour **so all direct contact with bats and other wild animals should be reported to KFL&A Public Health.**

Cabins used for sleeping should be inspected every spring before the camp opens. Inspection should include:

- Careful examination of the attic space, rafters, porches, and walls for signs of roosting bats (i.e. bat feces, crystallized urine, or a musty odour).
- Looking for openings through which bats can enter into sleeping quarters. Any openings larger than 0.5 inch by 0.5 inch and long thin slots larger than 0.25 inch by 2 inches are big enough for bats to pass through.
- Bat proofing cabins with evidence of bat roosts before they are used as sleeping quarters.

Camp buildings and cabins, particularly those used as sleeping quarters, should be **bat proofed**:

- Seal all openings.
- Use materials such as expanding spray-on foam, caulking, wire mesh, wood that fits tightly, steel wool (around pipes that enter building), etc., to seal gaps and holes.
- Make sure that windows have screens, chimneys are capped, and electrical and plumbing openings are plugged.
- Do not bat proof buildings during the period from late May to mid-August, to avoid trapping baby bats inside the building.
- Consult with a pest control contractor specializing in bats to obtain further information on bat proofing options.

Whenever possible, **bats should be left alone** to reduce the chance of potential human exposure to rabies virus. If a bat is found in a cabin, it should be evacuated and doors left open to allow the bat to fly out on its own. If it is necessary to remove a bat from an area where people may come into contact with it, the following guidelines should be followed:

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Kingston
221 Portsmouth Avenue
Kingston, ON K7M 1V5
Tel: 613-549-1232
1-800-267-7875
Fax: 613-549-7896

Cloyne
P.O. Box 59
14209 Highway 41
Cloyne, ON K0H 1K0
Tel: 613-336-8989
Fax: 613-336-0522

Napanee
41 Dundas Street
Napanee, ON
K7R 1Z5
Tel: 613-354-3357
Fax: 354-6267

Sharbot Lake
P.O. Box 149
1130 Elizabeth Street
Sharbot Lake, ON K0H 2P0
Tel: 613-279-2151
Fax: 613-279-3997

How to capture a bat safely:

- Designate and train a bat catcher for the camp.
- Wear a long sleeved shirt and long pants to reduce the chance of exposure.
- When bat lands, approach it slowly.
- Wearing gloves, place a container over the bat.
- Slide cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside.
- If there has been human exposure, tape the cardboard securely, and
- contact KFL&A Public Health.
- If there has been no human exposure, release the bat a reasonable distance from the building.

Bat capture kit for recreational camps

- Gloves (heavy, preferably pliable thick leather)
- Forceps (9" to 12" length, rat-tooth for gripping)
- Extension pole with net (fine mesh insect net of polyester or muslin material with a spring steel hoop on telescoping pole)
- Coffee can with tight-fitting lid or similar container (e.g. cardboard ice cream carton with lid; keep multiple containers on hand)
- Sheet of cardboard to slide between wall and container to act as a lid
- Tape (to secure lid on container)
- Flashlights (including fresh batteries and extra batteries)

Adapted from Simcoe Muskoka District Health

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