

School-to-Nature



Little Brown Bat

The Little Brown Bat has a body only just over 2 inches long (about the size of a small mouse), but with a wingspan of 8 to 11 inches. It weighs .29 ounces. Its life span is less than 10 years. They live in colonies, mainly in wooded areas in the hollows of dead trees, but occasionally they find a hole in the roof of a house and may live in an attic. These small bats were once common in our area, but they are becoming endangered because of a fungal disease called “white nose syndrome.”

They are nocturnal, as are most bats. During the day they find shelter and hang upside-down under roof edges, in protected areas on tree trunks, or in wood piles. At night they hunt their prey, insects, especially mosquitos, sometimes 600 per hour! They use echolocation to find their prey; and bats can be flower pollinators in their search for insects. Raptors like owls are their greatest predators. Young bats may fall from their roosting shelter and are eaten by grackles, snakes, foxes, minks, weasels, and feral cats.



Remember that bats are mammals (not birds). These bats only give birth to one baby per season. The mother bat gives birth hanging right side up. They can carry their young as they fly, but not may do (see the photo to the right). Nesting colonies of Little Brown Bats start forming in April and May and birth is in June or July. While nursing her pup the mother bat may eat half of her body weight in insects.



Humans should never fear bats. They help greatly to control mosquito populations and are not harmful to people. Some home owners are putting “bat houses” in their yards to welcome Little Brown Bats, and enjoy watching them fly in the summer evenings.

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