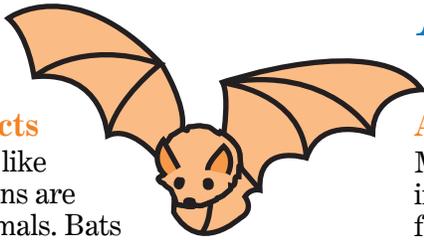




Beneficial Bats

Backyard Habitat for Wildlife



Bat Facts

- Bats, like humans are mammals. Bats are the only mammals that can fly.
- Female bats usually give birth to one young or pup per year.
- Bats are nocturnal - active at night, resting during the day.
- Bats have excellent eyesight, and are never "Blind as a bat!" To find their way around in the dark, they use echolocation or a built in sonar.
- Worldwide, there are about 1000 species of bats, some weigh as little as 2 grams while others can weigh as much as 2 pounds.

Attracting Bats

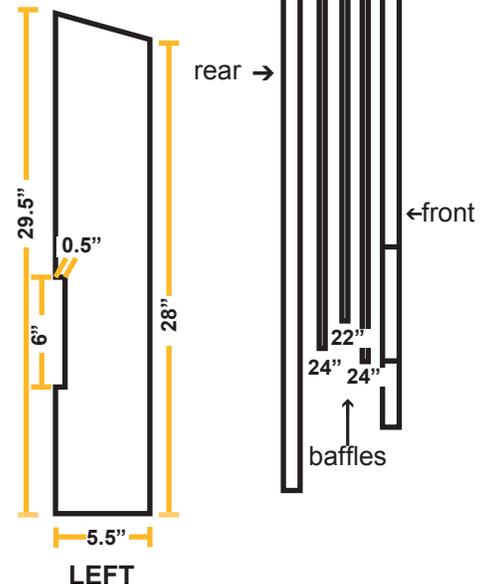
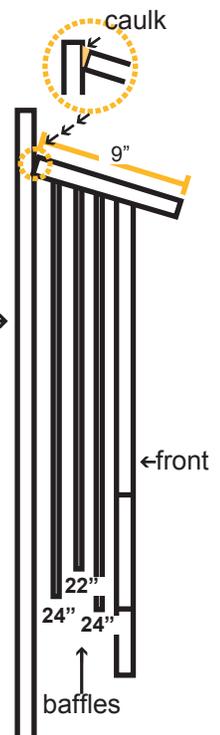
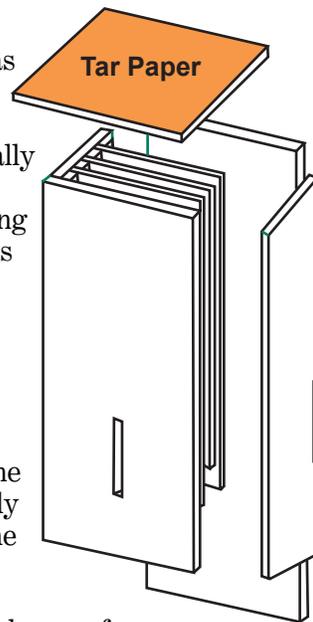
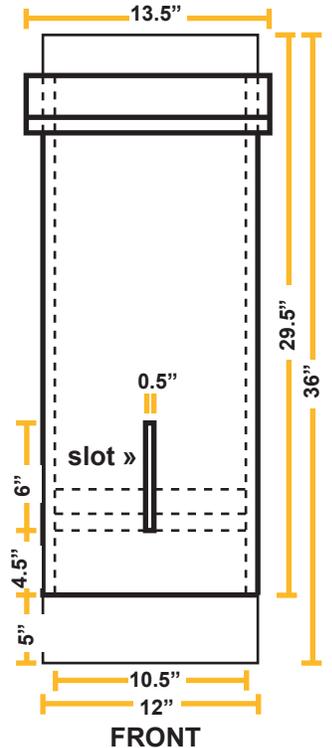
Most bats spend the winter hibernating in caves and move to trees or buildings for the summer. Some, however, spend all year in caves and others (tree bats) seldom see a cave, preferring to roost in trees during the warm summers and tree hollows for the cool winters. Minnesota's tree bats migrate south for the winter.

As hollow trees are cut down, bat boxes, such as the one shown here, are needed for bats to survive. This is especially true in April to August when females are looking for safe and quiet places to give birth and raise their pups. Both the mothers and newborns are very sensitive to being disturbed.

Install a bat box anytime but late winter and early spring is best. Hang the box at least 10 feet off the ground, in a spot where it can receive six hours of morning sun. About 100 bats can live in this bat box.

Building a Bat House

- Using CDX plywood or cedar, cut all pieces to size.
- To give the bats something to cling to, space shallow saw kerfs or knife gouges about 1" apart on the plywood baffles or staple plastic (not metal) screening instead.
- Screw 3/4" x 1" spacer strips on side panels to make slots for the baffles.
- Attach front panel to sides. Add roof. Glue baffle edges and drop into slots. Attach back panel and caulk.
- Darken with waterbase stain. Tack or staple tar paper to roof of the box to increase heat absorption.



Bat Food

Most bats in the United States, including all bats found in Minnesota, feed exclusively on insects. A bat feasting on moths, mosquitos, beetles and other insects can eat one half of its body weight in one night! Backyard bats help reduce insect pests that bother you and your garden plants. A typical summer colony of 100 bats feeding 200 days will consume more than 2,200 pounds of insects or about 600,000,000 bugs!

Bats of Minnesota

- Big Brown Bat¹
- Eastern Pipistrelle Bat
- Eastern Red Bat
- Hoary Bat
- Little Brown Bat¹
- Northern Long-eared Bat^{1,2}
- Silver-haired Bat

¹ may use bat box

² federally proposed as endangered