

BATS

Out of the Darkness



Get to Know BC's Bat Species

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Pallid Bat - *Antrozous pallidus*

Pallid bats are one of BC's most threatened bat species – and one of the rarest mammals in the province. In Canada, they are only found in the Okanagan Valley. They are also one of the largest bats, second only to the hoary bat. They can be easily identified by their pale colour.

Pallid bats prefer the Okanagan's arid grassland and open forest habitats. They hunt over open grasslands, but have also been seen feeding over gravel roads in open forest habitats.

Pallid bats are strong. They can capture large invertebrates, such as scorpions, which they typically take back to their roost to consume. They feed by gleaning prey from the ground or from foliage, and occasionally by catching



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prey in the air.

Pallid bats produce a skunk-like odour from their muzzle glands, possibly to deter predators. They give birth to one or two pups in May or June.



Townsend's Big-eared Bat - *Corynorhinus townsendii*

Check out those ears! The Townsend's ears are nearly half its body length. During winter hibernation they curl them back (like ram horns), likely to help reduce heat loss.

They are easily awoken during hibernation if there are significant temperature changes or disturbances. By end of winter they may be at half their pre-hibernation body weight.

The Townsend's big-eared bats' habitat ranges from coastal forests to arid grasslands. They mate in the winter, between November and February. Females give birth to one pup in late June to mid-July.



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Big Brown Bat - *Eptesicus fuscus*



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As its name suggests, big brown bats are one of BC's largest species. Big

brown bats look similar to myotis bats, but are considerably larger. They can be found in a variety of habitats, including arid grasslands, and interior and coastal forests.

Big brown bats can catch an insect every three seconds – this includes time to find, catch, chew and swallow their prey! A colony of 150 big brown bats can eat enough cucumber beetles during the summer to prevent 33 million eggs from being laid, and consequently hatching into rootworms, which are a crop pest

Females gestate for around 60 days before giving birth to one to two pups.



Spotted Bat • *Euderma maculatum*

This bat is distinguished by its black fur with three white spots. It also has the biggest ears of any North American species of bat. In Canada, it can be found only in BC. Provincially, it is a blue listed species of special concern.

Important spotted bat roosting sites in the Okanagan Valley include the cliffs at Gallagher Bluff, Spotted Bluff, McIntyre Bluff, Vaseaux Lake and the Vaseaux canyon. Spotted bats hunt near marshes, agricultural fields and over ponderosa pine forests. They eat mostly medium-sized moths.

Females birth one pup in June or July.



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Silver-haired Bat • *Lasionycteris noctivagans*



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This species is commonly found throughout the province. They frequent grassland and forest habitats. The Okanagan Valley's cottonwood trees provide important roosting sites for silver-haired bats. They roost alone or in small groups of up to six.

Silver-haired bats have two active feeding peaks: the first is between 10pm and 12am, the other is an hour before dawn. They are skilled at hunting in swarms of insects. The species typically eats small insects, such as ants, midges, moths and flies.

They give birth to one to two pups each summer. The pups develop quickly and are able to fly after three weeks.



Eastern Red Bat - *Lasiurus borealis*

Male red bats are more brightly coloured than the females. Both prefer forest habitats and roosting in foliage. This can make the species more susceptible to predation from hawks and other tree dwelling animals. They do have one trick up their wing, which is to act like a leaf. Resembling dead leaves makes them difficult to spot.

Eastern red bats give birth to one to four pups. They have four mammary glands in order to feed all of their pups simultaneously.



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Hoary Bat - *Lasiurus cinereus*



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Hoary bats are the largest bats in BC. They can be identified not only by their size, but also by their hoary colour and long, soft fur. Their colouring helps them camouflage against bark, and their fur keeps them well-insulated.

The species is usually found in the province's forests and grasslands. They feed throughout the night on large insects, such as dragonflies, beetles and moths. They've been found taking advantage of hunting near artificial lights that attract moths. Hoary bats are territorial hunters. They make loud chirping noises when defending their territory.

Female hoary bats do not form maternal colonies. Instead, they maintain family groups for several weeks after pups take flight. They have between one to four pups in mid-May to mid-June. Hoary pups take flight when they are five weeks old.



California Myotis - *Myotis californicus*

This bat is one of the province's smallest species. It looks similar to the western small-footed myotis, which can make identification difficult.

The colour of their fur can vary from dark to reddish-brown. They inhabit grasslands as well as coastal and montane forests. In the Okanagan Valley they mainly eat caddisflies, but also occasionally feed on moths, flies and some beetles.

California myotis bats mate in late fall, but delay fertilization until spring. Like other bat species, the females store sperm throughout the winter and ovulate in time to birth one pup from May to early June.



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Western Small-footed Myotis - *Myotis ciliolabrum*



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Western small-footed myotis bats are commonly found in BC and are the province's smallest bat species. In the Okanagan, these tiny bats feed mainly on caddisflies. They also eat other types of flies as well as beetles and moths. Westerns prefer to feed over rocky bluffs. They rarely hunt over open water.

This species usually hibernates alone, or in very small groups of two to three. They wedge themselves into tight crevices to stay warm over the winter. Females typically give birth to one pup in early summer.



Long-eared Myotis - *Myotis evotis*

These bats are common in BC. Their fur can range in colour from yellowish brown to nearly black.

Long-eared myotis bats can be found in a variety of the province's habitats, including grasslands, ponderosa pine forests, montane forests and coastal regions. Their hunting habits vary. They glean insects from vegetation or the ground or catch insects in flight. They use their long ears to listen for prey just before attacking.

Females give birth to a single pup during the summer.



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Little Brown Myotis - *Myotis lucifugus*



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Despite its name, the little brown myotis is actually a mid-size myotis species. It can be hard to differentiate from Yuma myotis bats.

Little browns occupy a range of habitats and have the widest altitudinal range of all of BC's bats. They have been spotted at sea level and in the Rocky Mountains. They often use human structures, like buildings or bat boxes. Their favourite prey are aquatic insects, including caddisflies, mayflies and midges. They eat their prey while flying. They typically feed for 15 to 20 minutes before resting.

Little brown bats are endangered in Canada due to the devastating impact of White-nose Syndrome.



Northern Myotis - *Myotis septentrionalis*

Northern myotis bats are one of province's rarest. In BC, their range extends from the Revelstoke area up to north-eastern BC. Elsewhere in Canada, they are typically found in boreal forests.

They prefer to hunt just above the forest understory, three to ten feet above the ground. Northern myotis bats prey on caddisflies, beetles, moths, leafhoppers, flies and spruce budworms (a forest pest), amongst other insects.

Females give birth to a single pup each summer.



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Fringed Myotis - *Myotis thysanodes*



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Fringed myotis bats get their name from the fringe of small stiff hairs that cover the edges of their tail.

In BC, they can be found in arid grasslands and ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forests. They eat many kinds of insects, including crickets, lacewings, moths, flies and beetles.

Fringed myotis bats begin hunting one to two hours after sunset. In flight, they are slow but agile and have the ability to hover.

In maternity colonies, if a pup falls from the roost its mother or another female guardian will fly down to retrieve it. The pup will grab hold of the adult to be carried to the safety of the colony.



Long-legged Myotis - *Myotis volans*

Long-legged myotis bats are one of the most widespread species in the province. They can be found in a range of habitats. They are also one of the largest myotis species in BC. The colour of their fur varies from reddish brown to black.

They remain active for most of the night, even when temperatures cool. Long-legged myotis bats feed mainly on moths, but are also opportunistic hunters and will eat termites, spiders, flies and other insects.

Scientists have recorded long-legged myotis bats living for over 21 years.



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Yuma Myotis - *Myotis yumanensis*



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Yumas are found at low elevations in the province. They inhabit coastal forests, ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forests as well as grasslands, and often use human structures, like buildings and bat boxes.

Yuma myotis bats are efficient hunters. They can eat enough for one night in just ten to 15 minutes! In the Okanagan Valley, their diet consists mainly of aquatic insects, especially midges, mayflies and caddisflies. Yumas are closely associated with water. They are the most frequently caught species when mist nets are set up along streams and rivers.

