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More mosquitoes, more bats

News

Aug 07, 2008

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An increase in the mosquito population in Ontario and Quebec this summer will result in more conflicts with bats. Insects are an important part of the diets of these "bug superheroes," but these creatures also bring with them human health concerns and major damage.

Bats can fit through a hole the size of a dime and can easily gain entry to attics, walls, crawlspaces, roofs and sheds and colonies can range in size from a few to several hundred, depending on the space and availability of food sources.

"We seem to have this dual fascination with bats," says Humane Wildlife Control President Bill Dowd. "On one hand, we fear them because of their scary looks and 'blood-sucking' reputation. On the other hand, we're fascinated by them too and they do help control pesky mosquitoes" he adds.

Increased Potential for Human Contact and Rabies Exposure
 Bats this summer will be fed well on a diet of mosquitoes and other insects – up to 3,000 per night. As a result, survival and birth rates will be up and more baby bats living in attics and roofs will gain access to living spaces. This means more conflicts with people.

Bats have very small teeth and bites can go undetected, especially when sleeping. Bats are the most common carriers of rabies. Health units advise anyone finding a bat in their living space in the morning or who have come into contact with a bat to seek immediate medical attention. Rabies can cause severe illness and death if not treated promptly, and health units err on the side of caution.

Feces and Access Key to Damage Problems

- Bats can fit through a hole the size of a dime and can easily gain entry to attics, walls, crawlspaces, roofs and sheds.
- Droppings (guano) and dead bats can cause severe odour, damage and contamination of property and heating/AC systems.
- Colonies can range in size from a few to several hundred, depending on the space and availability of food sources.

Brown Bats Can Carry Other Diseases

- Bed bugs are a growing problem in Ontario and Quebec cities. Bats are common carriers of bed bugs, which multiply and look for other hosts, such as pets and people, when they roost in buildings. They are extremely difficult to eradicate and bites can cause serious itching and welts.
- If inhaled by humans, bat guano can cause an incurable respiratory disease called histoplasmosis. The very young, very old and those with impaired immune systems are at greatest risk for severe illness.

Difficult to Detect, Remove and Keep Out

- Health units do not recommend people remove bats themselves because of potential health risks.
- Brown bats are very difficult to detect and should be removed before temperatures get colder or they will go dormant for the winter and proper sealing will ensure they do not return.
- Bats feed on a 24-48 hour cycle. Plugging a hole after they leave at night may seal half the colony in and cause building damage and disease.

Humane and Effective Removal the Best Method
 Humane Wildlife Control uses humane methods to remove bats and keep babies with their mothers. Professional operators guarantee their work –



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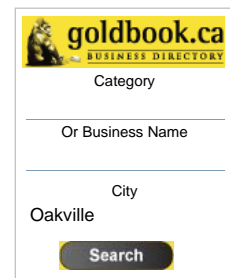
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both the removal of the bat and making sure they don't gain access.

Humane Wildlife Control has been an industry leader since 1989, and has pioneered several humane removal and exclusion techniques for a wide variety of urban animals.

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