

## Bats

Bats play a major role in our ecosystem. However, bats are associated with several diseases that can cause harm to humans. Rabies is perhaps the most well-known disease associated with bats. Along with animals such as foxes, raccoons, and skunks, bats are one of the primary animals that transmit rabies. Some bats live in buildings, and may continue to do so with little risks to inhabitants if they are unable to access living areas and the potential for contact with people is low. However, bats should always be prevented from entering rooms of your home. The first strategy to preventing bats from entering your home is to “bat proof” your home or living quarters to prevent bats from using your home for a roosting site. For best results, contact an animal control officer or wildlife conservation agency and ask for assistance. Here are some “bat proofing” techniques:

- Carefully examine your home for holes that might allow bats entry into your living quarters.
- Any openings larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch, should be caulked.
- Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking. Ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.
- Most bats leave in the fall or winter to hibernate, so these are the best times to “bat-proof” your home. During summer, many young bats are unable to fly. If you exclude adult bats during this time, the young may be trapped inside.

If a bat is in your home, please contact Animal Control for assistance in capturing the bat or after hours contact the New Jersey State Police. Residents are discouraged from letting the animal fly free from the home if there is any chance the animal may have been in the residence overnight or anytime residents may have been sleeping. Capturing the bat is important for rabies testing.