



Bats of Oklahoma Field Guide

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation



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Thank You

We appreciate all who have graciously provided their time and talents during the creation of this publication to help further education in identification of Oklahoma bats.



About the Oklahoma Bat Coordinating Team

The Oklahoma Bat Coordinating Team was created to implement a communications plan to facilitate information flow to partners, scientific cooperators, interested parties and stakeholders about bat and cave management, bat research and bat diseases in Oklahoma. The team serves as the Oklahoma contact for the Western Bat Working Group, which is a partner of the Coalition of North American Bat Working Groups. It is composed of the following agencies, organizations and universities in Oklahoma:

Alabaster Caverns State Park, Oklahoma
Tourism and Recreation Department

Central Oklahoma Grotto

Cherokee Nation

Fort Sill Natural Resources

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

Rogers State University

Selman Living Laboratory, University of
Central Oklahoma

The Nature Conservancy

Tulsa Regional Oklahoma Grotto

University of Central Oklahoma

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USFWS, Ecological Services

USFWS, Ozark Plateau National Wildlife Refuge



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Cover Photo: Tri-colored Bat by Lynda Loucks



Introduction

This book is published by the Oklahoma Bat Coordinating Team in cooperation with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

It is our hope that this field guide will help others appreciate the bats in Oklahoma. Additionally, it will help those who work closely with bats, including biologists, naturalists, wildlife control agents and rehabilitators, with bat identification.

Each species profile is complete with a photo, range map and general information about the species and its behaviors in Oklahoma.

The following is an explanation of how to accurately read each species profile:

Total Length: Bat length from tip of nose to tip of tail.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Preferred roost during the spring to early fall.

Pup Development Period: Period from birth to flight.

In Hand: Useful information for those who examine bats in hand.



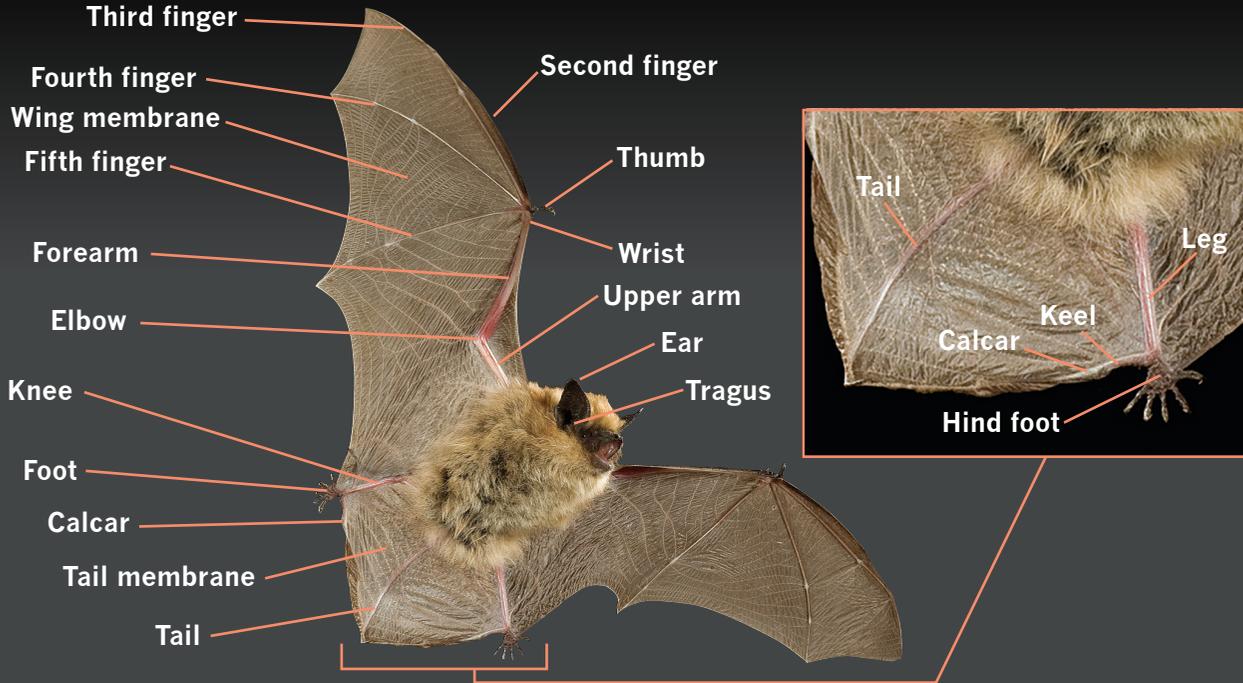
Range Map Key



This map shows the 77 counties of Oklahoma. The purple area indicates the counties in which the particular bat can be found.



Anatomy of a Bat



Bat Conservation International (BCI)



Big Brown Bat

(Eptesicus fuscus)

Wingspan: 13 – 16 inches.

Total Length: 3.5 – 5.25 inches.

Color: Glossy chestnut brown above, paler below. Wings, tail, ears and nose are dark brown to black.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Caves, buildings, bat houses.

Evening Flight Time: About 20 minutes after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Flight appears slow and deliberate. May fly near roost before flying off to feed.

Pup Development Period: Late May to late July.

In Hand: It is large in size, with a forearm greater than 1.5 inches and a distinctly keeled calcar.

Cool Fact: Females are larger than the males.



Greg Stewart



Big Free-tailed Bat

(Nyctinomops macrotis)

Wingspan: 17 – 18 inches.

Total Length: 5.5 – 6.25 inches.

Color: Glossy, light reddish-brown to black fur.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernation/migration habits unknown in Oklahoma.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Rock crevices in high places such as cliffs and canyon walls.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Fast and strong flier, but not maneuverable.

Pup Development Period: June to mid-August.

In Hand: Large, rounded ears are joined at the base and appear to point forward.

Cool Fact: The big free-tailed bat needs to drop at least 8 feet to gain flight.



BC1



Canyon Bat

(*Parastrellus hesperus*)

Wingspan: 7 – 9 inches.

Total Length: 2.5 – 3.5 inches.

Color: Pale fur varies in color from yellow to light gray to reddish-brown.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Crevices in cliffs and rock canyons.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges before sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Slow and erratic flier, sometimes mistaken for a moth. Feeds over water and around urbanized locations.

Pup Development Period: June to late July.

In Hand: Smallest bat with a wingspan of 8 inches.

Cool Fact: Canyon bats have been seen foraging with swallows before sunset.



BC1

Cave Myotis

(*Myotis velifer*)

Wingspan: 11 – 13 inches.

Total Length: 3.75 – 4.5 inches.

Color: Dark, dull/matte (not glossy) brown fur above with paler color below.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Caves and buildings.

Evening Flight Time: 10 – 15 minutes after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Flies approximately 13 to 40 feet above ground while foraging, and tends to fly close to vegetation.

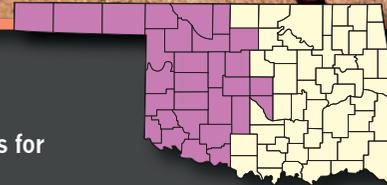
Pup Development Period: May to July.

In Hand: Bare patch on the back between the shoulder blades.

Cool Fact: Cave myotis have been known to use abandoned cliff swallow nests for daytime roosts.



Lynda Loucks



Eastern Red Bat

(Lasiurus borealis)

Wingspan: 11 – 13 inches.

Total Length: 3.5 – 4.25 inches.

Color: Males are bright orange-brown to reddish-brown; females have reddish-brown fur with white hair tips.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Migratory, but can go into a state of physical inactivity similar to hibernation when in leaf litter.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Roosts in trees.

Evening Flight Time: Before dark.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Commonly seen flying below streetlights and along edges of tree-covered areas.

Pup Development Period: May to July.

In Hand: Look at the red color to distinguish from the seminoke bat, whose fur is a deeper and richer mahogany color.

Cool Fact: The tail membrane is completely furred, and when roosting, the Eastern red bat will wrap its body in the furry membrane like a blanket.



Greg Stewart



Eastern Small-footed Bat

(*Myotis leibii*)

Wingspan: 8 – 10 inches.

Total Length: 3 – 3.25 inches.

Color: Fur is golden-brown and glossy above and paler below. Ears and wings are black.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Crevices of cliffs, buildings, bridges and rock piles.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges shortly after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Flies slowly and erratically 3 to 10 feet above the ground.

Pup Development Period: Early May to unknown.

In Hand: Black mask.

Cool Fact: The Eastern small-footed bat is one of the last bat species in North America to begin hibernation.



Greg Stewart



Evening Bat

(*Nycticeius humeralis*)

Wingspan: 10 – 11 inches.

Total Length: 3.25 – 3.75 inches.

Color: Dark brown fur. Ears, wings and tail membrane are black.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Migratory.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Tree crevices and behind loose bark, as well as buildings and bat houses.

Evening Flight Time: Early evening and just before dawn.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Feeds over clearings and water.

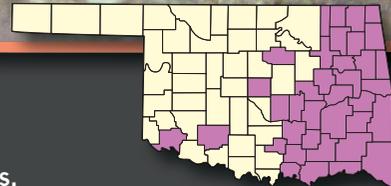
Pup Development Period: Late May to mid-July.

In Hand: Similar to the big brown bat; however, the forearm is less than 1.25 inches and the calcar is not keeled.

Cool Fact: Evening bats may follow other bat species to good foraging grounds.



David Arbour



Gray Bat

(*Myotis grisescens*)

⚠ Federally Endangered

Wingspan: 11 – 13 inches.

Total Length: 3.25 – 3.75 inches.

Color: Gray-colored fur.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Migratory.

Preferred Daytime Roost: In caves.

Evening Flight Time: Sunset to soon after dark.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Forages mostly over rivers and lakes and within the protection of forest canopies.

Pup Development Period: Late May to late July.

In Hand: Wing membrane is attached to the ankle of the foot instead of the base of the toes as in other myotis species.

Cool Fact: Gray bats exhibit great loyalty to their roosting and hibernating caves, returning to the same locations year after year.



BC1



Greater Mastiff Bat

(Eumops perotis)

Wingspan: 21 – 23 inches.

Total Length: 6.25 – 7.5 inches.

Color: Brownish to dark gray above and paler below.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernation/migration habits unknown in Oklahoma.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Unknown in Oklahoma.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges after complete darkness.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Fast and strong flier. Will fly long distances (15 miles) to search for food.

Pup Development Period: May to September.

In Hand: Large size and rounded ears.

Cool Fact: The greater mastiff bat is the largest bat in the United States.



Bruce Taubert



Hoary Bat

(*Lasiurus cinereus*)

Wingspan: 13 – 16 inches.

Total Length: 5 – 6 inches.

Color: Blackish-brown or tan at base of fur; tips are white, giving the bat a frosted appearance. Yellowish forearms and neck area.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Migratory.

Preferred Daytime Roost: In trees.

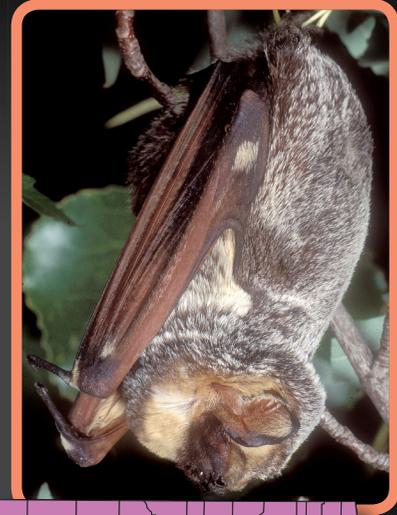
Evening Flight Time: Late evening.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Flight is strong and erratic. Hunts at treetop level.

Pup Development Period: May to July.

In Hand: Distinctive large size and frosted appearance.

Cool Fact: Hoary bats regularly make a chatter sound.



Greg Stewart



Indiana Bat

(*Myotis sodalis*)

⚠️ Federally Endangered

Wingspan: 9 – 11 inches.

Total Length: 3 – 4 inches.

Color: Dark gray to dark brown, dull fur. Ears, wings, and tail membrane are pinkish.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Under loose and peeling bark of dead or partially dead trees.

Evening Flight Time: About 25 minutes after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Forages at tree canopy level and over water.

Pup Development Period: June to late July.

In Hand: Hairs on toes do not extend past toenails. Has a distinctly keeled calcar.

Cool Fact: During spring and summer, the Indiana bat eats insects with soft bodies such as moths, but after the young are raised, it eats more hard-body insects such as beetles.



Greg Stewart

Little Brown Myotis

(*Myotis lucifugus*)

Wingspan: 9 – 11 inches.

Total Length: 2.5 – 4 inches.

Color: Glossy, pale tan to dark brown fur. Ears and wings are black.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Buildings, bat houses and caves.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges at dusk.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Forages over water, flying low over the surface.

Pup Development Period: Early June to late July.

In Hand: Hairs on toes extend beyond toe tips. Ears extend beyond the nose when laid forward.

Cool Fact: The little brown myotis can fill its stomach in about 15 minutes. However, in less than an hour it has already processed the food.



Greg Stewart



Mexican Free-tailed Bat

(Tadarida brasiliensis)

Wingspan: 12 – 14 inches.

Total Length: 3.5 – 4.25 inches.

Color: Dark brown to dark gray fur.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Migratory.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Caves, bridges, buildings and bat houses.

Evening Flight Time: Usually before sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Feeds from 15 to several thousand feet above the ground. It will travel miles from the cave while feeding.

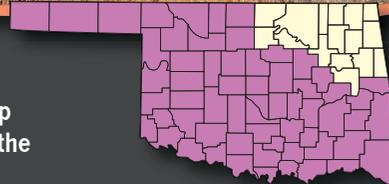
Pup Development Period: Late May to late July.

In Hand: Wrinkled lips and rounded ears. Tail extends beyond the edge of the tail membrane.

Cool Fact: Four caves in western Oklahoma serve as major nursery caves for up to 3 million Mexican free-tailed bats each summer. Gov. Brad Henry declared the Mexican free-tailed bat Oklahoma's state flying mammal in April 2006.



BC1



Northern Myotis

(*Myotis septentrionalis*)

Wingspan: 9 – 11 inches.

Total Length: 3.25 – 3.75 inches.

Color: Dull gray fur with a golden wash.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Under loose tree bark and inside hollow trees and caves. Occasionally roosts in buildings and bat houses.

Evening Flight Time: After sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Forages under forest canopy, over water and along forest openings and edges.

Pup Development Period: June to late July.

In Hand: Ears extend beyond the tip of the nose when laid forward. Ears are long and rounded with a distinctly long and sharp-pointed tragus.

Cool Fact: In addition to eating flying insects, the Northern myotis can find insects on the ground by listening for their movements with its long ears.



BC1



Ozark Big-eared Bat

(*Corynorhinus townsendii ingens*)

⚠ Federally Endangered

Subspecies of the Townsend's big-eared bat.

Wingspan: 12 – 13 inches.

Total Length: 3.5 – 4.5 inches.

Color: Pale brown to nearly black above and paler below.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Limestone caves and sandstone rubble at the base of cliffs.

Evening Flight Time: An hour after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Has a characteristic “head down” appearance because its ears extend directly out in front of the head.

Pup Development Period: Late May to late July.

In Hand: The large ears are over 1 inch long. There is a lump on each side of the nose.

Cool Fact: During hibernation, the Western big-eared and Ozark big-eared bats will roll up their ears.



Shea Hammond



Pallid Bat

(*Antrozous pallidus*)

Wingspan: 15 – 16 inches.

Total Length: 3.5 – 5.25 inches.

Color: Fur above is pale and yellowish with brown or gray-tipped hairs. Almost white below.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernation unknown in Oklahoma.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Rock crevices, rock piles and buildings.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges about 45 minutes after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Listens for prey with its large ears, and when located, will land on the ground and crawl to catch its food.

Pup Development Period: Early May to late July.

In Hand: Large ears are almost half as long as the total length of its head and body.

Cool Fact: The pallid bat can detect the sound of the footsteps of some of their prey, including scorpions. It will then land on the ground and crawl to capture its prey.



BC1



Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat

(*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*)

Wingspan: 10 – 12 inches.

Total Length: 3.25 – 4.25 inches.

Color: Grayish-brown above. Bicolored underneath due to hairs with whitish tips and contrasting dark brown to black bases.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Buildings, under loose bark and hollow trees.

Evening Flight Time: Late in the evening.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Flies swiftly and can almost hover.

Pup Development Period: Late May to mid-July.

In Hand: The large ears are almost an inch in length, with a lump on each side of nose.

Cool Fact: The Rafinesque's big-eared bat usually has a night roost where it takes large prey to leisurely consume.



Greg Stewart



Seminole Bat

(*Lasiurus seminolus*)

Wingspan: 11 – 13 inches.

Total Length: 3.5 – 4.5 inches.

Color: Deep, dark reddish-mahogany brown; hair tips may be white.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Migratory, but will go into a state of physical inactivity similar to hibernation when in leaf litter.

Preferred Daytime Roost: In Spanish moss, loose tree bark or clusters of leaves.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges early in the evening.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Feeds over watercourses and clearings and generally at treetop level.

Pup Development Period: June to late July.

In Hand: Reddish-mahogany hue distinguishes this bat from the reddish-orange of the eastern red bat.

Cool Fact: When the Seminole bat is resting, its furry tail membrane is folded down over its belly.



BC1



Silver-haired Bat

(Lasionycteris noctivagans)

Wingspan: 11 – 13 inches.

Total Length: 3.5 – 4.5 inches.

Color: Black fur with silver-tipped hair. Wings are black.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Migratory.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Hollows, cracks and crevices of trees.

Evening Flight Time: Shortly before or after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Usually feeds over ponds and creeks.

Pup Development Period: Mid-June to late August.

In Hand: The tail membrane is lightly furred closest to body.

Cool Fact: Silver-haired bats will sometimes use abandoned woodpecker cavities as a nursery.



Greg Stewart



Southeastern Bat

(*Myotis austroriparius*)

Wingspan: 9 – 11 inches.

Total Length: 3 – 3.5 inches.

Color: Brownish to grayish fur above and tan to whitish below.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Not well known in Oklahoma, but may use caves, bridges, buildings and hollow trees.

Evening Flight Time: In Oklahoma, some emerge soon after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Flies directly to a water source in the evenings. When feeding, flies very low over the water's surface.

Pup Development Period: Late April to early July.

In Hand: Hair on toes is long, extending beyond nails.

Cool Fact: The Southeastern myotis is the only myotis known to give birth to twins.



BC1



Tri-colored Bat

(Perimyotis subflavus)

Wingspan: 8 – 10 inches.

Total Length: 3 – 3.5 inches.

Color: Varies from pale yellow to golden-brown.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Caves, rock crevices, tree foliage.

Evening Flight Time: May emerge as early as one hour before dusk.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Slow flyer, often mistaken for moths.

Pup Development Period: Late May to late July.

In Hand: Skin over forearm bones is reddish, contrasting with black wing membranes. Each hair is tri-colored: grey at the base and light yellow in the middle with brown tips.

Cool Fact: In hibernation, the tri-colored bat is occasionally covered with water droplets, which sparkle like diamonds.



Duane Del Vecchio



Western Big-eared Bat

(*Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens*)

Subspecies of the Townsend's big-eared bat.

Wingspan: 12 – 13 inches.

Total Length: 3.5 – 4.5 inches.

Color: Pale brown to nearly black above, paler below.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Caves, rarely buildings.

Evening Flight Time: An hour after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Has a characteristic “head down” appearance because its ears extend directly out in front of the head.

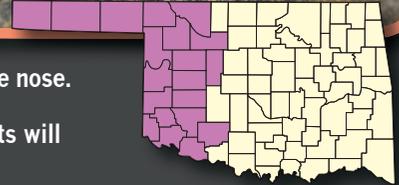
Pup Development Period: Late May to late July.

In Hand: The large ears are over 1 inch long. There is a lump on each side of the nose.

Cool Fact: During hibernation, the Western big-eared and Ozark big-eared bats will roll up their ears.



BC1



Western Small-footed Bat

(*Myotis ciliolabrum*)

Wingspan: 8 – 10 inches.

Total Length: 3 – 3.5 inches.

Color: Usually brown, but can vary from light brown to yellowish color above and paler on the belly. Ear, wing and tail membranes are black.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Tight crevices in rock faces, clay banks, between boulders and beneath bark.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges at dusk.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Flies slowly and erratically, preferring to forage over water and along cliffs and rocky slopes.

Pup Development Period: Late May to early August.

In Hand: Tragus is slender and pointed. Forearm is 1.25 to about 1.5 inches. Face is black and contrasts with pale fur, making the bat look like it is wearing a mask.

Cool Fact: This bat usually hibernates alone, wedging itself into tight crevices with its belly against the ceiling and its head downward.



BC1



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Yuma Bat

(*Myotis yumanensis*)

Wingspan: 9 – 10 inches.

Total Length: 3 – 3.5 inches.

Color: Pale gray to yellowish above and buff or nearly white below.

Over-Wintering Behavior: Hibernates.

Preferred Daytime Roost: Buildings, bridges, caves, rock crevices.

Evening Flight Time: Emerges shortly after sunset.

Feeding/Flying Behavior: Forages over water and riparian areas. Flies low, rarely above 30 feet from the ground.

Pup Development Period: Late May to mid-July.

In Hand: Forehead is sharply angled.

Cool Fact: The male yuma bat, as with some other bat species, is usually not found near nursery roosts.



BC1



Why care about bats in Oklahoma?

Bats play highly beneficial ecological and economic roles. Bats consume mosquitoes, moths and other night-flying insects, including some that cause extensive agricultural and forest damage. In Oklahoma, the avoided cost value of bats (reduced cost of pesticide application) is estimated to range from \$6 million to \$24 million per year.* They also play a vital role in cave ecosystems, providing nutrients for other cave life through their droppings, and serve as prey for other animals such as snakes and owls.

Get involved!

Help protect bats in Oklahoma by purchasing a publication from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, sending a private donation or buying a Wildlife Conservation Passport, conservation license plate, fishing license or hunting license in the state. Don't miss out on the annual Selman Bat Watch near Freedom, Oklahoma. You will see millions of bats fly over your head and off into the twilight. For more information on buying products and attending the Selman Bat Watch, visit wildlifedepartment.com.

* Boyles, J.G., P.M. Cryan, G.F. McCracken, and T.H. Kunz. 2011. Economic Importance of Bats in Agriculture. *Science* 332 (6025): 41-42



Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

Established in 1909, the mission of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is to manage, protect and enhance wildlife resources and habitat for the scientific, educational, recreational, aesthetic, and economic benefits to present and future generations of citizens and visitors to Oklahoma.

Wildlife Diversity Program

The Wildlife Diversity Program is a program of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. It began in 1981 as the Nongame Wildlife Program to raise awareness of and address the conservation needs of the broad range of fish and wildlife species that are not traditional sport fish and game. Altogether, these species account for more than 800 kinds of fish, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians and many thousands of insects and other invertebrates. In 1997, the program was renamed the Wildlife Diversity Program.

The Wildlife Diversity Program's creation enhanced the focus on research, monitoring, information sharing, special programs and new sources of funding for those species that are not hunted and fished. It is primarily funded by State Wildlife Grants, private donors and the sales of Wildlife Department license plates, publications and Wildlife Conservation Passports.



