

— Your Guide To —
DEFENDING YOUR HOME
— Against —

BATS



9 5 7 2

Big Brown Bat

Little Brown Bat

Size (Adult)

4-5 in

2.5-4 in

Wingspan (Adult)

11-13 in

8.5-10.5 in

Weight (Adult)

0.8 oz

0.2-0.5 oz

*Appearance
& Physical
Characteristics*

- Fur color is generally chocolate brown on back, pinkish to olive-colored on belly, but can vary wildly
- Large skull with sharp, heavy teeth
- Broad nose
- Large, bright eyes
- Rounded ears

- Glossy fur that ranges in color from dark brown, to reddish, to golden brown depending on the individual
- Small ears
- Large hind feet
- Head is flattened at the braincase

*Avg. Lifespan
in the Wild*

Most die after their first winter, but survivors can live up to 19 years

6-7 years

Behavior

- Primarily nocturnal
- Use echolocation to avoid obstacles and hunt for prey
- Use different calls depending on if the bat is searching for prey, navigating terrain, etc.
- Hibernate in the winter months

- Primarily nocturnal
- Leave roosts at dusk and are primarily active for two to three hours afterward and then again just before dawn
- Use echolocation to locate prey, navigate terrain, etc.
- Hibernate in the winter months
- Have separate roosts for daytime, nighttime, hibernation, and rearing young
- Form hibernation colonies that can house over 300,000 bats at one time

*Feeding
Habits*

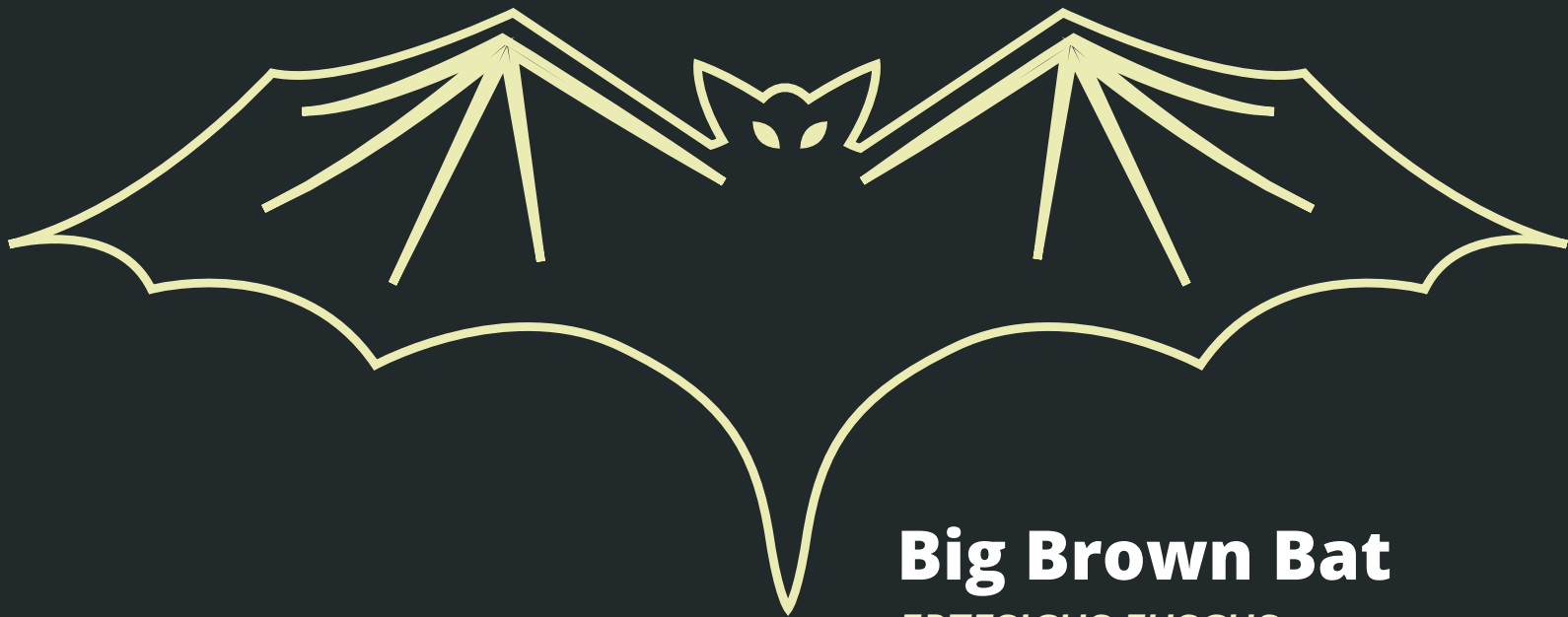
- Prey primarily on beetles, using its powerful jaws to crack the beetle's hard exoskeleton
- Also prey on other flying insects such as moths, flies, wasps, ants, dragonflies, etc.
- Before winter, will eat up to a third of its body weight in order to accumulate enough fat to hibernate
- Begin foraging after sunset, will eat until full, and then roost upside-down to digest its meal

- Prey on swarms of flying insects then catches several in mid-air by trapping them in their wings
- Also prey on insects on the surface of water by swooping down and grabbing them with their strong jaws
- Primarily feed on beetles but will also eat moths, mayflies, mosquitoes, lacewings, caddisflies, and other insects
- Young bats remain active for longer periods of time in the fall in order to build up a sustainable amount of fat for hibernation

*Mating
Habits*

- Litter size: 1-2
- 50-60 day gestation period
- Females form maternity colonies to rear young, varying in size from 5-700 bats
- During rearing, males will roost alone or in small groups separate from females
- Most young bats die during their first winter because they cannot store enough fat
- Reach adulthood at one year

- Litter size: 1-2
- 50-60 day gestation period
- Mating follows active and passive phases and is promiscuous, with bats of both sexes mating with several other bats



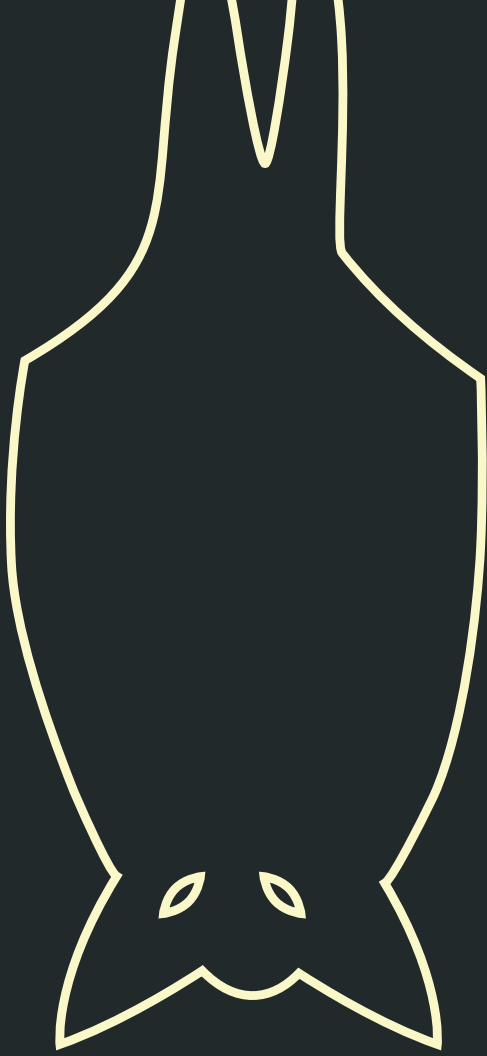
Big Brown Bat

EPTESICUS FUSCUS

While they can be found in heavily forested regions, the big brown bat prefers to roost in cities, towns, and populated rural areas. The bats benefit from the high concentration of insects in these areas, and humans get a free, eco-friendly form of pest control.

Like all bats, big brown bats are nocturnal, roosting during the day and hunting at night using echolocation. While flying, they will make different calls depending on the situation, whether it be navigating terrain, searching for prey, approaching a target, or attacking.

Their taxonomic name *Eptesicus* means “house flyer,” due to the big brown bat’s skill at breaking and entering. All it takes is a small hole or warped piece of siding for a big brown bat to get into a home, at which point the benefits of their bug hunting are outweighed by the risks they bring to the homeowner.



Little Brown Bat

MYOTIS LUCIFUGUS

While its common name might imply that it's simply a smaller version of the big brown bat, the little brown bat actually belongs to the *Myotis* genus, made up of bats defined by their mouse-like ears used for echolocation. Other key differences include glossier fur and a flatter head.

Nevertheless, the little brown bat is indeed considerably smaller than its cousin, with adults only growing to about two-thirds the size of mature big brown bats.

Unfortunately, their smaller size makes it even easier for little brown bats to squeeze into holes and cracks in a house's lining.

Why They Invade

Like any other invasive animal, bats are always on the lookout for a safe place to sleep, mate, and raise young. Human dwellings are safe and warm, making them perfect candidates.

In homes, bats particularly like to roost in attics, soffits, louvers, chimneys, and porches. They'll also occasionally roost behind shutters and under siding, eaves, shingles, and roof tiles.

Outside of human dwellings, bats will also roost in barns, silos, churches, stadiums, and other buildings that humans inhabit. These areas all provide stable and highly-insulated environments for female bats to raise young, so they're all at potential risk of invasion.

Breeding peaks from early May to mid-August, but bats also migrate south for the winter. This means that Georgia homes are always potentially at risk of a bat taking up residence.





The Damage They Cause

While bats do indeed prey on disease-spreading bugs such as mosquitoes, they carry a number of diseases themselves that can be harmful to humans. Bats will bite if they feel threatened, and while their ability to spread rabies to humans is often over-exaggerated, it's nonetheless possible. They'll also spread bat mites, which are similar to bed bugs.

The real danger bats bring comes from their droppings, or guano. Bat guano can spread histoplasmosis, a potentially-fatal disease inhaled through spores. Because they prefer to roost in attics and ceiling spaces, a bat infestation poses the very real threat of spreading histoplasmosis spores through the HVAC system, contaminating the entire house.

Beyond safety, a bat infestation can also result in huge monetary losses if left untreated. Any home materials that come into contact with guano have to be either properly sanitized or removed entirely, and can ruin insulation, sheetrock, and particle board.

Bats leave rub marks when they enter or exit roosts, caused by the oils on their skin. These rub marks can damage or destroy sidings and gables, and can darken wood and other material like vinyl siding.



What You Can Do

Bats can squeeze through holes less than an inch in diameter, so it's imperative for any homeowner to seal any holes near the roofline or attic. Likewise, chimneys should be fitted with a tight-fitting steel cap, denying bats another possible entryway.

Unfortunately, aside from stopping bats from getting into the home in the first place, there's not much a homeowner can do in the case of an infestation. Bats are a protected species and young bats cannot be removed until they are capable of leaving on their own.

If you suspect bats may be getting in, watch the exterior of your home for about 30 minutes after the sun goes down every day. This is when bats become most active and start hunting, so if a bat colony is present, you'll likely see them exiting the roost and/or flying around closeby during this time.

When to Call a Professional

If you've seen bats near the home or have found other tell-tale signs like guano, call a professional immediately. The sooner a professional can get to work fixing the problem, the less costly and dangerous it will be in the long run.

When a professional treats the house, he or she will be able to conduct a full inspection of the premises and identify any gaps where bats might be getting in, and if there is indeed an infestation.

Unfortunately, young bats are protected by law and cannot be forcibly removed until they can leave of their own accord, meaning that the exclusion process can't begin in full until the bats reach maturity.

However, once the young bats are able to leave, a professional can install special bat netting that allows mature bats to leave the house but not get back inside. This humane solution ensures that the bats themselves are not harmed while simultaneously getting the bats out of the house and into the surrounding areas where they can continue hunting bugs.

After all bats have vacated the home, a professional will also be able to effectively clean the infested area of any hazardous waste using specialized equipment, then re-seal any holes to ensure bats won't be a problem in the future. They can also perform regular checkups to ensure the continued safety and defense of the home.

