

Washington, D.C. Bat Species List

Washington D.C.'s bats are divided into two main groups based on their roosting habits- "cave bats" and "tree bats." "Cave bats" hibernate in caves during the winter and usually form colonies to roost and raise their pups during the summer. These colonies can be found in tree cavities, buildings, or other human-made structures. "Tree bats" tend to be solitary and roost under pieces of bark or in small groups. Tree bats often forage in the upper forest canopy and migrate long distances during the spring and fall.

Washington, D.C.'s Cave Bats

Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)

Big brown bats are ubiquitous throughout the United States and are found in both cities and rural environments. They usually form maternity colonies under loose bark and within small tree cavities. Other maternity roosts are commonly found in buildings and barns and under bridges.

Big brown bats are a highly adaptable bat species that can relocate to human-made structures in response to increasing levels of habitat loss. They can also tolerate cooler temperatures than other bat species, allowing them to roost in

less insulated structures. Big brown bats are insectivorous and are specialized to prey upon beetles, but they will also consume other insects such as moths, ants, wasps, and flies. In Washington, D.C., big brown bats are one of the more likely species to form a colony inside of a home and are commonly observed foraging at dusk.



(Photo Credit: Paul and Joyce Berquist)

Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)

White-Nose Syndrome has decimated populations of little brown bats in Washington, D.C., and they are expected to become extirpated within the next few decades. Where they remain, little brown bats often



(Photo Credit: SM Bishop)

form large summer maternity colonies in buildings containing hundreds to thousands of individuals. During the winter, many hibernate in caves in large colonies. Little brown bats produce only one pup each year. They forage on aquatic insects, such as mosquitoes, flies, and beetles, and typically feed on swarms to save time and energy while searching for food. Little brown bats often consume half of their body weight while foraging at night. Despite their small size (less than a half ounce!), they have been documented to live up to 34 years.

Tri-colored Bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*)

The tri-colored bat, formerly known as the Eastern Pipistrelle, is characterized by the presence of three colors on their individual hairs. The hair base and tip are dark, and the middle is yellow-brown. Tri-colored bats emerge early to forage at dusk and feed on a variety of insects. They begin hibernation early in the fall and are late to emerge in the spring. They hibernate in sites deep within caves and mines where temperatures are more stable, and tri-colored bats return to these sites each year. Little is known about their roosting habits and parental behavior, but they have been observed to hibernate individually or in small groups of 2 or 3.



(Photo Credit: Brian Lee Cooper)

Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)



(Photo Credit: Keith Christenson)

The northern long-eared bat has experienced huge population declines due to White-Nose Syndrome and was recently listed as *federally threatened* under the Endangered Species Act. They have characteristic long ears that when folded forward extend past the tip of their nose. Northern long-eared bats often live in dense forests and use peeling bark and tree cavities for maternity roosts. They hibernate in caves and underground mines, where they typically use cooler areas in the cave than tri-colored and little brown bats. Northern long-eared bats are usually solitary and hibernate alone or in very small groups. Little is known about their specific food preferences; however, they are often observed foraging early after dusk for insects over streams and in forest clearings.

Washington, D.C.'s Tree Bats

Eastern Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*)

Eastern red bats are Washington, D.C.'s most abundant "tree bat." Their pelage color ranges from a deep red to a yellow-red, and males tend to be redder than females. The tips of their hairs are white, giving them a frosted appearance. They roost solitarily on low tree branches, camouflaged like a leaf as they hang partially wrapped in their furry tail membrane. Eastern red bats often give birth to twins and can have litters of up to five pups. They are among the earliest bats to emerge at dusk and



(Photo Credit: Merlin Tuttle)

typically forage on insects around forest edges, in clearings, or around streetlights where they consume mostly moths. They migrate in the fall along the same migratory pathways as many birds to warmer climates, and very little is known about their winter roosting behavior. However, they have been documented to hibernate in leaf litter on the ground. Like other migrating bat species, eastern red bats appear to remain unaffected by White-Nose Syndrome.

Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)



(Photo Credit: Merlin Tuttle)

Hoary bats are the largest bat species in Washington, D.C. They have dense, white-tipped silky fur, creating a frosted ("hoary") appearance. They are rarely seen by humans, as they aren't attracted to manmade structures and stay well-hidden in foliage throughout the day. They wait until after dark to emerge and forage, and peak activity tends to occur about five hours after sunset. Hoary bats are insectivorous and prey primarily on moths. Though hoary bats roost solitarily, they sometimes migrate south in groups during the late summer and early fall.

Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)

Silver-haired bats possess silver-tipped hairs running down their back and have a slightly upturned nose. They are an elusive species that prefers to roost in forests near bodies of water. They often roost under peeling bark and will form maternity colonies in tree cavities or small hollows. They will also occasionally roost in wood piles, on cliff faces, and in cave entrances. Silver-haired bats tend to forage early in the evening and again before sunrise, perhaps to avoid competition with other faster-flying species throughout the night. Silver-haired bats prey upon a large range of agricultural and human pest insects, including moths, flies, and beetles.



(Photo Credit: John MacGregor)

Evening Bat (*Nycticeius humeralis*)



(Photo Credit: David Arbour)

Evening bats are dark brown in coloration and are distinguished from other small bats by their hairless, broad, dark snout. Though they may resemble other *Myotis* species, they may be distinguished by their curved tragus. Evening bats are social and roost in small colonies. They roost in tree hollows, under peeling bark, and inside buildings, and they migrate south in the fall.

Bats of Unknown Status in Washington, D.C.

Eastern Small-footed Bat (*Myotis leibii*)

Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*)