

SC Bat ID Guide

Many of the 14 bat species found in SC can be tough to identify due to their nocturnal nature. Take good photos when possible without disturbing bats. Sometimes, dead bats may be found at a roost. If so: take pictures of the bat, wear thick gloves to avoid direct contact, place in two Ziploc bags, transfer to a freezer, and contact Jennifer Kindel (864-419-0739, Kindelj@dnr.sc.gov) immediately. DO NOT handle live bats.

MOST LIKELY TO USE BAT BOXES:

Big Brown Bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*)



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Big brown bats are closely associated with humans, often roosting in human-made structures and commonly using buildings as hibernacula. It is the 3rd largest bat in SC. Big brown bats have a relatively heavy body, black ears and wing membranes, and a large head with a broad nose and powerful jaw. The pelage (fur) is dark above and light below and varies from glossy dark brown to pale. The ears and tragus are short and rounded. They can be found throughout the state. Little brown bats are considerably smaller with pointier ears and a small muzzle. Evening bats look very similar to big brown bats but are smaller.

Brazilian/Mexican Free-tailed Bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*)



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This species is the easiest bat to identify in South Carolina. It is the only bat with a tail that extends beyond the tail membrane. The upper lip of this species is strongly wrinkled, the blackish ears are short and nearly square, and the short, velvety pelage is dark brown to dark gray. In the past, Brazilian free-tailed bats were found primarily south of the Piedmont region, but in recent years they have been commonly recorded into the upper Piedmont.

MORE LIKELY IN BUILDINGS THAN BOXES:

Evening Bats (*Nycticeius humeralis*)



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The evening bat is a medium sized bat with dark brown pelage above and paler below, generally with light ash-gray hair tips on the dorsal area. The bats are found statewide. This bat is just over 2 inches in length. This species has a short, broad skull and the ears are short and rounded. In South Carolina, it is common throughout the majority of the state.

Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*)



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Rafinesque's big-eared bat is a medium sized bat with ears that measure 1.5 inches long. Another distinctive feature of this species are the facial glands located on either side of the nose. The pelage is a gray brown to dark brown above and whitish with dark rooted hairs below, and the hair on the claws extend past the toes. This species has been found in all parts of SC other than the Piedmont region.

OTHER SPECIES KNOWN TO ROOST IN BOXES, BUT MUCH LESS LIKELY TO FIND:

Eastern Small-footed Bats (*Myotis leibii*)



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The eastern small-footed bat is the smallest bat in South Carolina. This species is a small brown bat with a black mask, black ears, and distinctively small feet measuring only 0.2 to 0.3 inches. The pelage is black at the root with glossy brown on the tips, and is dark on the back and whitish to buff on the belly. The wing and tail membranes, as well as the muzzle, are a dark chocolate color. This species has short, broad wings with rounded wingtips. In SC, this species is only found in the Blue Ridge region.

Little Brown Bats (*Myotis lucifugus*)



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This species is scarce in the southern part of its range. The little brown bat is small to medium sized with a pelage of dark brown to cinnamon-buff with long glossy tips above, and pale gray to buffy below. The ears and membranes of the wing and tail are dark brown to black. The ears are narrow and pointed.

Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)



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The northern long-eared bat is a medium sized bat with short, broad wings. Its pelage is light brown to gray brown on its back and pale grayish brown to pale brown below. The ears and membranes of the wing and tail are slightly darker brown than the dorsal pelage. The ears are narrow and pointed, and the long tragus is pointed. In SC, this species is primarily found in the Blue Ridge Mountains, but there are also some reports on the coastal plain.

Southeastern Bat (*Myotis austroriparius*)



The southeastern bat is a small to medium sized bat. It can vary in color, but generally, the pelage is dark at the base with whitish tips, and is thick, wooly, and relatively short. Though there are a few records of this species in the upstate, it is usually limited to the upper and lower Coastal Plain in South Carolina.

If you're completing roost counts and can't be certain which bats you have, always mark unknown.

For further information about bat species of SC, visit:

<http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/bats/SCBatConservationPlanChapter3.pdf>

To find out more about the SCDNR Bat Watch program, visit:

<http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/bats/batwatch.html>