



# SC Bat Watch!

## What is it?

SC Bat Watch is a citizen science project in South Carolina to monitor bat roost sites. Bat Watch involves counting bats emerging from a maternity roost twice during the summer. SC Department of Natural Resources needs your help to find and monitor these roosts!

## Why?

Bats are a challenging group to study, which has led to a lack of basic information about many bat species. Recently, bats in North America have been hit with White Nose Syndrome (WNS). WNS is a fungal disease that has caused the deaths of more than 6 million bats since it was first discovered in 2006. By increasing the number of colony counts in the state, this project will help biologists get a broader picture of the impact WNS is having in SC.

There are 14 species of bats found in SC. Eleven of them are considered species of greatest conservation need, and 7 of these roost in colonies. Three SC species regularly utilize bat boxes, and several others are known to use man-made structures for their maternity colonies. By helping monitor roosting bats, you will be collecting valuable information on at-risk species.

## Who?

Anyone can participate! If you know of a maternity colony of bats and are willing to go out at least twice during the summer to count them as they emerge, you can participate. Since most bat colonies are on private land, we rely on land owners and volunteers to report colonies and conduct emergence counts.

## When?

The Bat Watch project offers 2 levels of involvement.

**Level 1:** *Bat Tracker* - 2 counts; one count from May 15-June 15 and a second count July 1-31.

**Level 2:** *Bat Enthusiast* - A minimum of 4 counts: 2 counts May 15- June 15 and 2 counts July 1-31. Counts can be conducted as often as every 2 weeks.

## How?

For SC Bat Watch instructions, data sheets, and bat ID guide: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/bats/batwatch.html>. If you know of an existing bat colony, but can't commit to more than one emergence count, report the colony online at: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/bats/batbox.html>. **Important:** Never touch a bat. See Bat Watch website for more information on why.

## Don't know of an existing bat colony?

Consider putting up a bat box to provide a home for bats in your neighborhood. Bat Conservation International (BCI) offers plans for building your own bat box, links to businesses that offer bat boxes that have met the standards of BCI's Bat Approved Certification Program, as well as helpful tips for where to place your bat box: <http://www.batcon.org/resources/getting-involved/bat-houses>. Also, consider checking with your local park – they may already have a bat box and may be willing to let you do an emergence count.