



Excluding bats

Thank you for looking at humane and environmentally friendly ways of dealing with your bat problem.

Most bats are not a problem in roofs. If you are genuinely having a problem with a very large number of bats in your roof then they are most likely Free-tailed bats. Other bat species may also be roosting in other areas of your roof, please keep that in mind if you are doing the exclusion yourself. Bats are clean animals, they don't chew wires etc... in your roof like rats do, they also provide an insect control service. One small bat can eat up to 600 mosquito sized insects in an hour. So before deciding to remove them make sure they really are problem.

The most effective and most humane method to remove bats from a roof is called exclusion and needs to be done outside of their breeding season or else the babies get stuck in the roof on their own and starve to death and rot in your roof. Not only is this unpleasant but also constitutes animal cruelty and can be prosecuted as such. Putting up bat houses before excluding the bats is a very good idea, it makes them a little less desperate to get back into the roof they've been excluded from and makes them less likely to invade other nearby roofs and cause a problem elsewhere.

There are no poisons registered for use against bats in South Africa. Therefore, the use of any poison, Jeyes Fluid, Chlorine, Fumitabs or other substance, is illegal and can result in a fine or even a jail sentence.

Bat houses

We do make bat houses for more information please email us at info@ReWildNPC.co.za or visit the below link to our FaceBook page <https://www.facebook.com/907089139311750/posts/2173952805958704?sfns=mo>

For what to look for in a bat house please see the link to the article below written by Merlin Tuttle this will help you in choosing a bat house <https://www.merlintuttle.org/selecting-a-quality-bat-house/>

The bat houses are best hung on a planted gum pole or under the eaves of an existing building, 2 houses back to back on either side of the pole if they are single chamber, multi chamber houses can be hung on their own on a pole. The bats like the bat houses high up (>3m). There needs to be a clear (no bushes, trees etc...) drop from the bat house entrance, try position the bat house away from trees, telephone wires etc... giving bats a clear exit and entrance flight path as it helps them avoid predators. The bats like their houses warm, ensure the bat house will get afternoon sun – some Free-tailed bats, particularly Angolan free-tailed bats, are quite happy to have multi chamber bat houses in full sun all day.

Remember there will be bat droppings under the bat house so position your bat house where you won't mind the droppings. The droppings make very good fertilizer. Bats are very fussy about their accommodation – they will not occupy a leaky or draughty bat house.

The bats will provide excellent insect control. The Free-tailed bats have a preference for moths although they also eat a lot of other flying insects (midges, beetles, mosquitoes etc...)

Bat Exclusion

Important points for excluding bats

- Exclude bats outside of their breeding season and avoid the cold winter months. Mid-June to September is safe to exclude bats in most of Limpopo, KZN and Mpumalanga, the rest of South Africa March to September but excluding July and cold spells. We recommend August as generally a good month to exclude bats. Should you have a bat problem during the breeding months please contact us so that we can help with conflict mitigation to ensure no bats are harmed.
- South African bats do not migrate away during the winter but they are often less noticeable during colder periods as they often torpor which is like a mini hibernation. Roofs cannot be sealed in winter based on the assumption that the bats are no longer there as they may still be in the roof but in torpor and not very active.
- “Exclusion devices” (pipes and occasionally plastic mesh) are placed at the exit/entrances that the bats are using. All other possible entry points are sealed (expander foam should not be used as it may engulf bats as it expands rapidly). Sealing of other possible entry points needs to be done before exclusion devices are placed over the exit/entry points.
- The exclusion device works like a one-way door, the bats fly out in the evening as they normally do but are unable to get back in. There is no need to chase bats out, use smoke, chemicals, poison or do anything else harmful to the bats. The bats should leave on their own in the evening with no pressure from any humans.
- Pipes: Empty silicone tubes well cleaned and with both ends cut open can be used. Otherwise PVC pipe 50mm can be used. Pipes are placed and secured over the entrance/exit hole. Pipes should have a downward angle to prevent bats climbing back up the pipe. Bats exit down the pipe but can't climb back up.



- Plastic mesh/cloth: Ensure mesh or cloth has no holes or loose thread that can result in bats becoming entangled. Must be securely fastened with no gaps on the top and sides, the bottom is left open for bats to exit. The drop of mesh used must be at least 50cm from top to bottom. Bats will try to re-enter at the top or sides. This is useful where bats are entering over a wide area or where exclusion pipes are not appropriate.



- The following needs to be checked: the bats are exiting through the exclusion devices safely, roofs checked that they haven't been inadvertently trapped in the building and that they haven't found another way back into the building. If any of these occur it needs to be fixed immediately.
- Exclusion devices should be left up for at least 7 days.
- Then if you've done it right and all the bats are out, you've given it 7 days to be sure, exclusion devices can be removed and the holes immediately sealed up.
- When bat exclusions are done properly, bats should not get harmed or killed.
- Putting up bat houses prior to exclusion does help the bats tremendously by giving them alternate accommodation nearby when they suddenly find that they can't get back into their home. It reduces the risk of bats taking up residence in a nearby roof. It is best to erect bat houses months before a bat exclusion if possible. The other benefits

of bat houses are that the bats get a safe house that they aren't going to get excluded from again and the homeowner continues to benefit from the insect control services provided by the bats.

- Roofs cannot be safely sealed after bats leave at dusk, not all bats fly at the same time and not all bats will fly every night.
- Bats should not be removed by hand. Some bats may be missed and then sealed into the roof, bats may be in torpor, bats may not be released properly, bats will likely return to the roof after release (some bats have been recorded flying at 160km/hr, bats should not be relocated to a different area for environmental reasons and bats will be exposed to additional predators, lack of known food and water sources and extra energy expenditure to get home which may compromise their survival. It is illegal to catch, transport and relocate bats without the necessary permits to do so.

Step by step guide to excluding bats

- Read the important points on excluding bats above. Ensure it is the right time of year to be excluding bats. Should you have a bat problem during the breeding months please contact us so that we can help with conflict mitigation to ensure no bats are harmed.
- Find where the bats are getting in and out of the roof. Look around the building between the wall and roof for any small gaps that have a dark patch around them, as the bats enter and exit the roof they will rub against the wall and with time will begin to mark the wall. You may also see white urine streaks on the walls where the bats exit and enter. Look for bat droppings (guano) on the ground around the building. From just before sunset and until dark watch the areas where you suspect the bats are getting in and out to confirm your suspicions. All entry and exit points require an exclusion device, there may be different species/colonies of bats roosting in the same roof but in different areas and using different exit/entry points. Never seal an entry/exit point until all bats have been excluded from the roof and exclusion devices have been left in place for at least 7 days.



Dark mark on wall

White urine streaks

Droppings on ground

- Seal up all gaps that could be used as an entry/exit but are not being used. Crack filler, silicone or similar can be used provided it has sufficient time to dry before dusk. Expanding foams should not be used, because they expand rapidly application is difficult to control and there have been cases of bats accidentally caught in expanding foam products during application.
- Place exclusion devices (pipes or plastic mesh depending on the building and architecture of the area used) over exit/entry points. In the evening watch that the bats are exiting. Check that bats are not re-entering the building. Once you are 100% certain that all bats are out wait 7 days before removing exclusion devices (this is a precaution as an individual bat may not have exited on the first night or two) Once exclusion devices are removed immediately seal the main entry/exit points with crack filler or similar.
- If bats do not exit through the exclusion devices then you have done something wrong, remove exclusion devices. If you can see what you did wrong with the exclusion device then wait 2 days to allow the bats to go out and feed before trying again or contact a professional for advice or assistance.
- If the bats flew out and the exclusion devices have worked but the bats have found another way into the roof then begin the process again from the start with the new entry/exit point.
- While the method of exclusion is simple it is not all that easy to get right first time but with patience and perseverance it is possible and does work.

Professional Help

While excluding bats is not difficult/complicated it takes a bit of practice and patience to get it right but you can do it yourself. It may take several attempts to get the bats out and not have them find a way back in. If you are interested in having professionals do it for you then please contact us for more details. We do offer bat exclusions using these methods which are internationally accepted as the only humane and effective way of getting bats out of roofs. We can also recommend other organisations that use these methods.

Many pest control companies claim to offer humane bat exclusions or removals. I would like to ask you to be cautious when using these companies and to observe what they actually do, from personal experience and reports from other people many of these companies resort to using poisons and other inhumane methods of excluding bats despite their claims not to. Bats are seldom successfully relocated, bats can and do fly long distances so when they are relocated they tend to return within a day or two. For this reason companies that claim to relocate bats normally catch them, take them away and kill them.

Killing bats is a temporary solution, the roof needs to be properly sealed or else another colony of bats is likely to take up residence within a year. If one goes to the trouble of properly sealing a roof then one may as well do a proper humane bat exclusion and not kill the bats.

Thank you for looking for environmentally friendly ways to resolve your bat problem. As much as the Free-Tailed bats can become a problem in roofs they do provide incredible pest control. Studies have been done in the USA estimating that bats provide pest control services to the US valued between \$3,7 billion - \$54 billion per year. Bats provide similar pest control services in South Africa. Bats have a long life-span and are slow breeding animals, their numbers are very sensitive to persecution.

If you need any other help or have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Should you have a bat problem during the breeding season please contact us so we can advise on ways to resolve the conflict with the bats so that no bats are harmed.

Many thanks and kind regards,

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