

BATS!

It's time to exclude bats from your homes and outbuildings if you are not comfortable having them around. Migrating bats will be returning soon and if they are unable to enter into the previous roosting areas, they will relocate. A colony living in your attic presently can be excluded with a few simple, safe and effective steps. Exclusion (excluding bats from the roosting areas permanently) is the best and sometimes the only legal way of removing them from your property. Some species of bats are protected and cannot be destroyed.

The most important thing to remember is that bats should never be touched with bare hands. Touching a bat can equate to what is termed as "exposure." If it is determined that the bat was infected with the rabies virus, then a series of injections is required to prevent rabies in the human exposed. Rabies is still considered a 100 % fatal disease, although there have been three reported cases in the last 150 years, where people have survived a rabies infection. While the rabies virus has not been found in dogs and cats in Utah, it is found in some bats in some areas. Always use gloves when handling bats or better yet, call a Wildlife Officer or Animal Control.

The State of Utah, Rabies Epidemiology Report stated that in 2009 there were 81 bats submitted for testing and 13 were found to be positive. The closest locations affected were Cache county and Weber county. Box Elder County did not submit any bats for testing. The United States is the only country in the world where human rabies infection does not occur often and this is because of our strict policies and laws regarding animal vaccinations.

Bats are extremely beneficial in insect control and some people like to keep them around for that reason. Bats can be kept near a residence by providing bat houses or boxes. There are plans for building a bat box available online at many websites. A few websites are listed at the end of this article and a free eight page handout is available for anyone interested in this topic. A copy can be picked up at the Brigham City offices, Library, Senior Center and at the Animal Shelter. This handout has information on safe handling, exclusion and a plan for building a bat box. There is also lot of information on the internet.

If you have any questions or concerns about this article, please call Animal Control Officer Chidester at (435) 734-6650. (Reference: www.eparks.org, www.batcon.org, www.thisoldhouse.com)