

Bats in houses

Bats are common throughout Australia. Bats found in houses are mostly microbats. There are many different species but they rarely exceed the size of a human hand. Some are much smaller and weigh as little as 2 grams. Microbats fly by echolocation and also use this mechanism to catch their food. Microbats eat insects, and houses with lights on tend to attract insects, which in turn, may attract bats. There is a small possibility that microbats may carry Lyssavirus and should not be picked up unless you have been vaccinated for rabies.

If there is a microbat in your house we recommend that you:

- Turn off inside lights, open the outside door/windows and turn on outside lights. Then leave the area taking pets with you, the bat will soon leave.
- If you think the bat is stuck or trapped it is very unlikely. Bats wedge themselves into all sorts of unlikely positions to rest, sleep or to feel hidden and secure.

Do not:

- **Panic** - the bat will not attack you and it will not fly into you.
- **Attempt to catch the bat** – some bats may carry the Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABL) which can only be transmitted through a bite or scratch. If you do not handle bats you should not be at risk. Also, they are very delicate and easily damaged.
- **Attempt to harm the bat**, they are native animals and so are protected by law.

Did you know?

- Microbats torpor through the winter (similar to hibernation) and become active again as the nights warm up.
- They usually give birth to twins who are born in late winter to early spring and hang on to their mother to suckle for the first weeks until they become too heavy. Then the mother leaves them when she goes to feed and returns to suckle the young.
- Some microbats live in caves but many live in tree hollows, overhangs and human-made similar shelters such as wood piles, eaves and garages.

For information about bats follow the link:
Australasian bat society <http://ausbats.org.au/#/about-bats/4551313477>

For more information or advice contact ACT Wildlife Inc. on **0432 300 033**
or visit our website www.actwildlife.net

Photos by Caroline Hennessy, qualified bat handler.

Do not attempt to handle bats without appropriate training or vaccinations.

