

Bats on Bridge Projects

What to do if you see a bat during bridge construction

What should I do if I observe bats (alive or dead) or signs of bats?

Leave them alone

- Bats will not attack and pose very little risk unless harassed. Most bites occur when people are attempting to capture or kill a bat.
- If you are bitten, seek medical attention immediately. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention notes that bat bites are medically urgent, though not emergencies. Bats can carry rabies, which humans rarely survive once symptoms set in. Symptoms can set in within as few as nine days.



Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) observed on Pier 8 while constructing the St. Croix River Crossing, Aug. 4, 2016.

Document them

Send documentation to Chris Smith, MnDOT Wildlife Ecologist, christopher.e.smith@state.mn.us.

- Take photos
- Note detailed description of location
- Add date and time of observation

What indirect signs of bats might I encounter?

- Droppings (guano)
- Urine staining
- Chirping/chattering



Guano accumulation observed on a bridge in Pine County that spans the St. Croix River, July 28, 2016.

Is it likely that I will see many bats?

No. Most bats avoid active construction projects.

What if I observe live bats in a structure that is being sealed up, or on a portion of the bridge where the construction is incomplete?

- Cease sealing work and contact Chris Smith as soon as possible to discuss next steps. Live bats should not be sealed in structures or otherwise harassed during construction, and must be safely removed and relocated by rabies-vaccinated personnel before sealing and other work begins.
- Additional permits may be necessary. Early detection by crews and prompt reporting will minimize interruptions to the construction schedule.

For more information

Contact: Christopher E. Smith, MnDOT Wildlife Ecologist
651-366-3605, christopher.e.smith@state.mn.us

Why it matters

Minnesota is home to eight species of bats, one of which – the northern long-eared bat – is protected by the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973. Four other species have state-level protections in Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well, and additional legislative protections are currently under consideration.

Future regulations may require MnDOT to incorporate additional conservation measures onto bridge projects to avoid impacting bats. It is important that we start learning about their use of bridge habitat now and demonstrate a commitment to good wildlife stewardship.



Little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) observed on a bridge in Pine County that spans the St. Croix River, July 28, 2016.

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