

Little Brown Myotis

Myotis lucifugus

STATUS

Endangered 

Endangered 



© LENNIE BURNS

Species Description

The Little Brown Myotis is a small bat (6-10 cm long) with a wingspan of 22-27 cm. It generally has brown fur along the face and back and lighter brown/grey fur under its chin and belly, though colouration can vary between individuals. Its wing membranes are dark brown and its facial skin is brown. Its tragus (a prominence in front of the ear) is blunt and rounded (see page 8) and its ears are black and small. Formerly known as the Little Brown Bat.



© CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE (BY PAUL GERBAGHTY)



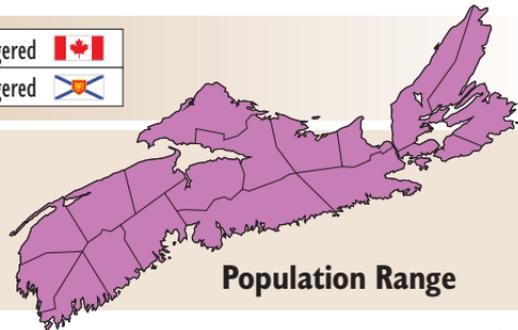
© HUGH BROEDERS

Overwintering cave



© MEGAN CROWLEY

The Little Brown Myotis occurs throughout NS. Its population has declined by over 90% since 2011.



Population Range

Habitat

During the summer, the Little Brown Myotis forages over water, along forested edges and in fields for flying insects. It roosts during the day in buildings (attics, barns), eaves of houses, woodpiles, under bark and in tree cavities. Females roost together in maternity colonies where they give birth and raise young (pups), while males are mostly solitary. They overwinter in Nova Scotia by hibernating with other bat species in cold and humid caves or abandoned mines.

Little Brown Myotis bats are most active at dusk and at night when they are foraging for insects, commonly in areas adjacent to water.

Interesting Points

- Little Brown Myotis bats are thought to be the most common bat in Canada, and occur in all provinces and territories.
- Bats play an ecologically important role by feeding on insects that are often considered agricultural or forest pests.
- White-nose Syndrome was first observed in 2006 in New York and in Canada in 2010. Since then millions of bats have died from this disease.



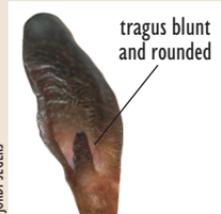
© JORDI SEGERS

Similar Species

Bat identification is difficult and handling is not advised. The most common method used to distinguish the three species below is by studying the tragus (prominence in front of the ear). There are three additional species of migratory tree bats in NS but they are larger and not very similar looking (refer to page 10). Slight differences between the three species are listed below.

Little Brown Myotis:

Shorter ears, hairy toes.

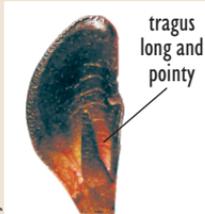


tragus blunt and rounded

© JORDI SEGERS

Northern Myotis:

Longer ears, toes not hairy.

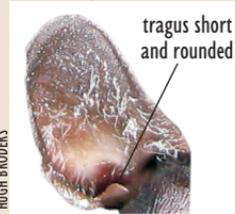


tragus long and pointy

© JOE POSSANT

Tri-colored Bat:

Shorter ears, slightly different colouration, forearms sometimes pinkish.



tragus short and rounded

© HUGH BROTHERS

Threats to Survival

- The most significant threat is White-nose Syndrome, a disease caused by the exotic fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*. Hibernating bats with this fungus rouse early and die of starvation and dehydration.
- Other threats include colony eradication, chemical contamination, changes in forest structure and wind turbines.



© MARK ELDERKIN

Bat out of hibernation and flying on a winter day

How You Can Help

Report current and historical bat sightings! Get involved with monitoring efforts. Avoid entering possible hibernacula sites to prevent human-caused stress on hibernating bats and spread of the fungus. Install bat boxes on your property. Dispel negative myths about bats and spread the word on how to help.



© JOE POSSANT

Radio-tracking bats for research

Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

Contact: NS Department of Natural Resources (902) 679-6091

Info: Bat Conservation International: www.batcon.org; whitenosesyndrome.org

Sighting Reports: Summer: www.batconservation.ca Winter: DNR (902) 679-6091

Stewardship: www.batconservation.ca