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Little Brown Bat

Little Brown Myotis

Scientific Name: *Myotis lucifugus*

Taxonomy: Mammal

Range: Yukon, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador

Last COSEWIC Assessment: November 2013, Endangered Status

SARA Status: No status, no schedule

Government of Alberta Status: Secure

Fact Sheet

Information adapted from:

Species at Risk Public Registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=1173)

Hinterland Who's Who (www.hww.ca/en/species/mammals/little-brown-bat.html)

Appearance

The Little Brown Bat weighs between 7 and 9 grams, and has a wingspan between 25 and 27 cm. Females tend to be slightly larger than males but are otherwise identical. It is pale tan to reddish or dark brown with a slightly paler belly. The ears and wings are dark brown to black.

They are nocturnal and are one of the few terrestrial mammals that use echolocation to gather information on their surroundings and prey location. The echolocation calls, similar to clicking noises, bounce off objects and this echo is processed by the bat. These noises are at a very high frequency and cannot be heard by humans.

Distribution

In Canada, the Little Brown Bat is found in all provinces and territories except Nunavut.

Even though Little Brown Bats do not usually migrate to destinations outside of Canada, individuals can move up to 1000 km from summer roosts to winter roosts where they hibernate. Its winter roosts are called hibernacula.

Threats

In the last 6 years, it is estimated that 5.7 to 6.7 million bats of several species, but mainly Little Brown Bat, have died in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada. This sudden increase in mortality has been associated with White-nose Syndrome (WNS) which is caused by a fungus likely from Europe. WNS impacts hibernating bats ability to survive the winter and has reduced populations by >75% in infected hibernacula.

Although WNS has not been found in Alberta yet, there is strong evidence that the same mortality trends will occur across the western Canadian population of Little Brown Bat.

Other threats to the Little Brown Bat include:

- disturbance or destruction of hibernacula and maternal colonies
- habitat loss
- use of pesticides
- presence of toxins in food web.

Habitat



www.hww.ca/en/species/mammals/little-brown-bat.html

Bats will roost in tree cavities or other places, like bat boxes, that stay dark and warm during the day. The fact that they huddle together and choose warmer locations is thought to help the pups grow more rapidly.

The species has been observed in a great variety of habitats, including all forest types, the southern edge of the Arctic tundra and urbanized areas, but it prefers areas close to wetlands, lakes or streams in the summer because of greater food availability. Most Little Brown Bats consume over 600 insects per hour when feeding at night.

On February 3, 2012, an Emergency Assessment Subcommittee of COSEWIC assessed the status of the Little Brown Bat as endangered.