

Colony Counts (Visual Bat Surveys)

1. It is best to conduct colony counts on warm nights without high winds or rain, bats may choose to remain in the roost when conditions are poor.
2. There are two important periods during the summer for monitoring maternity colonies:
 - a. Before the young of the year bats take flight (*pre-volant period*);
 - b. When the young of the year bats start foraging with their mothers (*post-volant period*).The timing of these periods varies from year-to-year, and by location. The pre-volant period will generally occur between May – June, and the post volant period will occur from July – September.
3. Check the sunset time for the Parry Sound region on the Environment Canada website (https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/on-103_metric_e.html). About 10-20 minutes before sunset to get comfortable and ready for your count. If multiple observers are present, position people at different angles to the bat house. Each observer should carry out his/her own count.
4. Before emergence, walk below your bat house to look for signs of guano (bat feces). The amount could help give an idea of the population inside the house.
5. Observers should be situated so that emerging bats from the roost will be silhouetted against the night sky. You can use a light to see your notes but avoid shining it on the bat house. Direct light can prevent the bats from emerging. Bats will typically begin emerging soon after sunset, although they may not come out until it seems quite dark. It is recommended to use a red light.
6. Count all the bats that come out of the bat house using a click counter or make ticks on a notepad each time you see a bat come out. Avoid counting bats that just fly around the opening. Often bats from another roost will come to investigate.
**In some instances, bats may re-enter the roost. Attempt to count the re-entering bats and subtract the number of these individuals from your tally. If it becomes too difficult to follow bats exiting and entering, try to get an approximate count, and note this in the comments section.*
7. End the count approximately 10 minutes after the last bat has exited the bat house. Large colonies may exhibit multiple waves of emergence, and intervals with no activity could last for more than 20 minutes. Record the time of the last exit and the temperature at the end of the count.
8. To complete the data sheet, record the name of each observer and the number of bats that each observer counted. Feel free to video record the emergence, and please include recordings or pictures when submitting the datasheets.
9. Submit your data to Bat Watch (www.batwatch.ca) , or the Georgian Bay Biosphere: info@gbbr.ca.



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Bat Colony Count Datasheet

SECTION A

Primary Observer Name: _____ Survey Site: _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): _____ Bat House Type: _____

Temp. (°C) at start: _____ Temp. (°C) at end: _____

Sunset time: _____ Photos/recordings taken: Y N

Time at the start of the survey: _____ Time at the end of the survey: _____

Time of first exit: _____ Time of last exit: _____

Sky at start

- Clear (0 to 10%)
- Partly cloudy (10-50%)
- Cloudy (50-90%)
- Overcast (90-100%)

Wind at start

- Calm
- Light
- Moderate
- Windy

Guano

- None
- Scattered
- Abundant
- Large Mounds

SECTION B

	Name	Years' Experience	Number of Bats Counted
	<i>Ex. Joe Smith</i>	<i>1 year</i>	<i>45</i>
Observer 1:			
Observer 2:			
Observer 3:			
Observer 4:			

COMMENTS

(Ex. Dead bats, disturbance to bat house, evidence of predation, significant weather)
