

## Where Are the Bats?

Bats are nocturnal, or active only at night. During the day they rest by hanging upside-down, tucking themselves into a small crevice where they are protected from weather and predators. When it's dark, they fly out from under the bridge and zig-zag through the sky catching insects.

## Look for Bat Scat & Look Up

Walk along the sidewalk and look inside. In the center of the road you will see piles of bat feces, also called guano.

Guano often looks shiny and brittle because it is filled with the exoskeletons of insects.



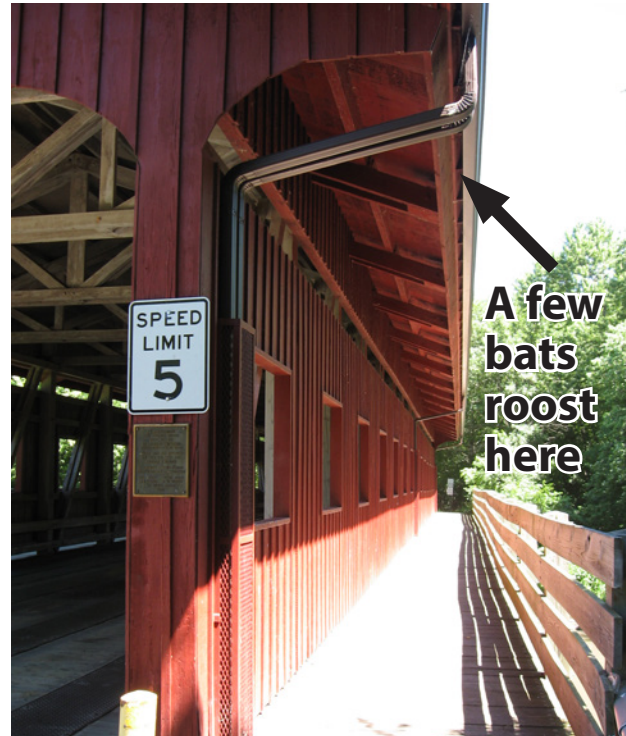
The guano has piled up on the road because bats spend the day in the gap between the center beams inside the bridge roof. This is likely a maternal colony, where mother bats raise their pups.



Look at the ceiling directly above the guano—many of the bats roost in the gap between the two main beams in the center of the roof.

## In the Eaves

A few bats spend the day in the crevice along the eaves of the bridge. Using a flashlight, look for bat faces looking down at you from above.



If you are visiting at dark, please observe park closing times. And be safe—wear reflective clothing and bring a flashlight.

## History of the Covered Bridge

The Lake of the Woods covered bridge was designed by German Gurfinkel, a civil engineering instructor at the University of Illinois, and is a replica of the original Pepperel Bridge near Boston.

It was constructed in the early 1960s to connect two sides of Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve after land was purchased on the west side of the river.



The bridge was dedicated in 1965 in honor of then Lake of the Woods Superintendent, Harold Moon, who directed its construction.

In 1996, major repairs and renovations were made. The base of the bridge was reinforced to prevent erosion, the entire deck was replaced, and the walkway area was widened as part of the newly constructed bicycle-pedestrian path.

# BATS AT THE BRIDGE

## LAKE OF THE WOODS FOREST PRESERVE



## Welcome!

You may have passed through the Covered Bridge many times before without ever noticing the bats that spend the summer here.

## What Do These Bats Eat?

All Illinois bat species eat insects. A single bat can eat up to 3,000 insects each night! They capture insects in flight by scooping them up in their wing or tail.



Bats are the major predators of night-flying insects, including garden and forest pests.

They begin hunting at dusk and may hunt throughout the night, resting between foraging flights.

## Where Do they Go in Winter?

Bats migrate south for the winter. A few travel as far as Mexico, but some go to southern Illinois—or further south—and hibernate in caves or other protected natural or man-made shelters.

## Bats at This Bridge

A survey of bats at the covered bridge was conducted in August 2017. The following species were identified in this area.

### Big Brown Bat

*Fur: Brown*  
*Wingspan: 13 in.*

Maternity colonies of 20-75 individuals occupy buildings like the covered bridge.

These are the most common bat at the bridge.

They can capture large insects such as beetles, and they commonly live over 10 years.



### Eastern Pipistrelle

*Fur: Yellow-brown*  
*Wingspan: 10 in.*

The smallest bat in Illinois. Maternity colonies roost in trees or the eaves of buildings.

They can catch an insect every 2 seconds!

Researchers often refer to them by their nickname - "pips."



### Hoary Bat

*Fur: Buffy with white tips*  
*Wingspan: 16 inches*

At 5-6 inches long, this is the largest bat in Illinois.

The long silky hairs are tipped in white, giving it a frosted or 'hoary' look.

They roost in trees, and migrate to Mexico for winter.



### Silver-haired Bat

*Fur: Black with white tips*  
*Wingspan: 12 inches*

These bats typically roost in tree cavities or under bark on dead trees.

They are slow fliers, but highly maneuverable.

They migrate long distances.



### Eastern Red Bat

*Fur: Brick red*  
*Wingspan: 12 inches*

These bats are solitary and typically roost in dense leaf cover.

The usual litter size is 3-4 pups, more than other bats in Illinois.



### Northern Long-eared Bat

*Fur: Brown*  
*Wingspan: 10 in.*

These bats snatch prey off of leaves, bark or the ground, in addition to catching them in the air. Their large ears help them hear the sounds their prey make, in addition to using echolocation.



## Other Bat Species in Illinois:

- Little brown bat
- Indiana bat
- Southeastern bat
- Gray bat
- Evening bat
- Rafinesque's big-eared bat