

Resilient Ecosystems

Standing Habitat

Bats

Let's focus on one attribute a snag has, sloughing bark. This is the bark on a dead tree that is still attached, but barely. This doesn't need to be bark on an old tree, but it does need to be mature bark. This type of attribute is not quickly renewable, it takes time for a tree to grow large enough for mature bark and then decay to a point where the bark has loosened from the bole of the tree.

If you are about to harvest, it is important to maintain trees that have old bark. These trees are not replaceable in our lifetime, and while we don't need to maintain them all, we do need to maintain some.

So, what does live below the bark? Bats of course! Most importantly, bat nurseries. As bats live in colonies, there needs to be room for all the new mamas. They need a group of trees with sloughing bark, or a really large tree.

Female bats give birth and raise pups in warm, protected features in large or defective trees, including:

- **Hollow trees**
- **Vertical cavities** accessed through stem scars
- **Deep stem cracks**
- Woodpecker **cavities**
- **Crevices behind loose or sloughing bark**
- **Large openings** in advanced-decay trees (e.g., western redcedar, cottonwood, aspen)

Bats are at risk for many reasons beyond a woodlotter's control such as a fungal disease (White-Nose Syndrome) and Climate Change. They are also at risk due to habitat destruction: keep your snags!

The forests of BC provide crucial habitat for these insect-eating flying mammals. They rely on snags for a variety of aspects, not just sloughing bark, but also for insect habitat and cavities.



Links

Did you know:

- BC has 16 native bat species, the highest diversity in Canada.
- Bats are reliant on forests for roosting, foraging for insects and nesting.
- Nearly half of BC's bat populations are currently listed as vulnerable or threatened.
- You can build bat boxes and scatter them around your woodlot or home.
- <https://bcbats.ca/bat-basics/bat-species-in-bc/>



Woodlots BC