



## Five bat myths debunked

**Myth 1: Bats suck blood.** Not in Michigan. All nine Michigan bat species are insectivores – meaning they eat bugs – and lots of them. They eat many agricultural pests, beetles, stinkbugs, moths, flies and mosquitoes. Bats can eat 600 to 1,000 insects per hour and may eat more than the bat's weight in insects in a single night.

**Myth 2: Bats are blind.** Not true. Bats can see quite well, better than humans in dim light. When insects are out and about it is usually dusk or dark, so bats use echolocation to find their food. Using high-frequency sounds, they listen for the echo to determine where objects are. Bats are well-adapted for flying in complete darkness and can avoid even the smallest obstacles. They can easily avoid flying into your hair.

**Myth 3: Bats carry bed bugs.** Nope. Bats, like all mammals, may be impacted by a variety of external parasites. However, bed bugs are not included on that list. Additionally, parasites found on bats typically prefer bats as their host and don't hang on to humans.

**Myth 4: Bats have rabies.** Most bats are not rabid. However, handling, or otherwise coming into contact with, a live bat should be avoided. A dead bat should be handled only with a protected (gloved) hand. If there is a potential exposure to a bat (being bitten or scratched by a bat, touching a bat with unprotected skin, waking up with a bat in the room, or a bat found in a room with a child or impaired individual), the bat should be tested for rabies. Local health departments have instructions on procedures to follow to submit the animal for testing. Learn more at [michigan.gov/rabies](https://michigan.gov/rabies).

**Myth 5: Bats do not benefit people.** Throughout the world bats provide a variety of benefits. Many bats are pollinators – eating nectar and spreading pollen for plants, which allows those plants to reproduce. In some cases, bats are the only pollinators for specific species of plants. Without bats to pollinate the agave plant, we would have no tequila. Some tropical bats also eat fruits from plants and then disperse those seeds through their droppings. And, of course, Michigan bats eat agricultural pests, such as green stinkbugs and spotted cucumber beetles.