

1. Is the ARC helpline available 24 hours a day?

The NParks Animal Response Centre helpline is manned 24 hours a day. NParks will send professional help if there is wildlife stuck or injured in your premises and is unable to find its way out. This includes any other type of wildlife apart from bats.

2. Who can I seek help from to devise a more permanent solution for my premises if there is a bat roost in my house or if a bat keeps returning?

There are various animal management companies in Singapore that can render their services and provide professional assistance. You can find a list of certified companies at our website: <https://www.nparks.gov.sg/avs/animals/animal-related-businesses/animal-management-companies/public-registry-of-certified-animal-management-specialists>

3. Why are there bats in my estate? Do they only occur in a particular region in Singapore?

Increased sightings of bats are usually recorded where nearby trees have begun to fruit. This is usually seasonal, and may last between a few weeks to months depending on the fruiting duration of nearby trees. Singapore is home to many species of bats and they are found naturally across the country both in forested areas as well as urban areas like landed properties and HDB estates.

4. Why are the bats coming into my house?

Bats can enter buildings for a variety of reasons. They usually do so if they are disoriented and fly in by accident. Other times, they could be attracted to something inside the house. For example, fruit bats will be attracted to the scent of fruits in the house, and insect bats will be attracted to insects that may be hovering around the light near the entrance. Bats are generally shy, and do not show aggression unless a person tries to handle or provoke them.

5. Why can't I just catch the bats from my garden and relocate them elsewhere?

As an outdoor garden space is porous, it would be a challenge to stop bats from entering. Catching free-flying bats is also not an effective means of preventing them from entering the space. We do not recommend direct handling or touching of bats, as this may cause them to bite in fear or defence. They may also get injured from improper handling. The bats will leave on their own when there is no suitable food source in the vicinity. Bats, are afterall, an important component of the urban ecosystem.

6. Do bats attack people?

Bats are generally shy and do not attack or show aggression unless a person tries to handle or provoke them.

7. Why don't we just get rid of bats? What use are they?

Fruit bats are pollinators and seed dispersers and play an important role in regenerating forests and ensuring their survival. The agricultural trade is also supported by bats that help pollinate plants such as durian and petai.

Insectivorous bats feed on mosquitoes, beetles and moths, thus helping to keep the insect populations in check. By feeding on insects, they also help to support agriculture as they reduce the damage the insects cause to crops, as well as reduce the need for pesticides.

8. What trees attract bats?

In general, fruit-bearing trees will possibly attract fruit bats when they bear fruit. This includes common fruit trees such as mango or chiku. In addition, other trees such as Tanjong Tree (*Mimusops elengi* L.) and *Xanthostemon* are also popular with bats when they fruit or flower respectively. Cave Nectar Bats and Lesser Dog-Faced Fruit bats help to pollinate some fruiting trees (e.g. banana, papaya etc) and are useful to have around your garden if you are growing fruit to eat.

9. Bats and coronavirus: True or false?

False: Scientists have confirmed that the COVID-19 coronavirus came directly from bats and infected people.

True: Scientists have confirmed that bats are hosts to corona-type viruses (a type of virus named after its shape) and have detected strains similar to the COVID-19 coronavirus. However, they are not known to infect people directly. In most cases, there needs to be an intermediate host for this to happen. Even so, the probability of this happening is extremely low. Hence, scientists speculate that bats are the potential source of an earlier, non-infectious coronavirus that mutated further to become COVID-19. It is still not confirmed if there could be an intermediate animal host between bats and humans that allowed for the mutation of COVID-19. **The exact animal source of the COVID-19 coronavirus is still not known.**

False: Since bats are hosts to other types of corona-type viruses, we should get rid of them to prevent the occurrence of another pandemic.

True: Removing of bats from our environment would do more harm than good. Not only would their removal cause an imbalance in the ecosystem which could lead to severe consequences (e.g. increased insect populations or lower reproductive success of plants), past experiments conducted by other countries showed that reducing bat populations actually increased the risk of virus mutation and transmission. Therefore, to maintain the balance of the ecosystem and ensure the safety of humans, scientists in NParks have been conducting biosurveillance on bats and other wildlife on a regular basis since 2011 to account for zoonotic viruses in our wildlife populations. So far, there have been no traces of transmittable virus strains detected in our local population of bats.