Exclusion is the best way to prevent bats from entering a structure

The Kane County Animal Control and Kane County Health Departments would like to remind residents that now is a good time to check for bats around their houses. Autumn is a time when bats are more prevalent in the community.

In Illinois, rabies is found in bats more than any other wildlife species. Yet it should be noted that typically less than 5 percent of bats *tested* for rabies are found to be rabid. Wildlife experts say that if you find a bat in your home, it should not be touched, and if possible confined in one room. Once confined, you should call Kane County Animal Control, (630) 232-3555 for removal and possible testing. If you have bats outside your home, consult a wildlife specialist for removal options. There is no exposure unless one is bitten by the bat or assumed exposure if you wake up to find the bat in a bedroom. Exposure to rabies requires a series of vaccinations against rabies that can be costly.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, exclusion remains the best way to prevent and control bats in a structure. Some bats, especially those in northern Illinois, leave their roosting places in September and early October to migrate south where they will overwinter in caves, rocky ledges and cliffs, and occasionally accessible walls and attics, where others hibernate throughout the winter season in Illinois.

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Therefore, bat entry points in structures are best sealed during the months of September through April. As bats are protected under the Illinois Wildlife Code, a list of wildlife control specialists, who may be familiar with bat exclusion procedures, can be obtained from the Animal Control website at www.kanecountypets.com and the University of Illinois Extension's website Living with Wildlife.

Always remember to have your pets vaccinated for rabies, as this creates another layer of protection, not only for them but for you too.

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