

How bats relocate in response to tree loss

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In a recent *Journal of Wildlife Management* study, researchers examined the movement of a maternity colony of big brown bats as a response to naturally occurring tree loss. Credit: Brock Fenton

Identifying how groups of animals select where to live is important for understanding social dynamics and for management and conservation. In a recent *Journal of Wildlife Management* study, researchers examined the movement of a maternity colony of big brown bats as a response to naturally occurring tree loss.

The colony began moving to a new patch of forest approximately seven kilometers away when cumulative loss of trees, over three years, in the old patch reached 18%. Most bats roosted in the new patch by year four,

when cumulative loss of roost trees reached 46%.

The authors noted that to maintain high densities of suitable roost trees for bats, management plans must retain live and [dead trees](#) in multiple stages of growth and decay.

"This is the first time that the movement of bats in response to a natural loss of roost trees has been documented. Our work suggests that general patterns for how [bats](#) respond to loss of roost trees may exist across bat species and forest types," said lead author Kristin Bondo, MSc, Ph.D., of the University of Regina, in Canada.

More information: Kristin J. Bondo et al, Bats relocate maternity colony after the natural loss of roost trees, *The Journal of Wildlife Management* (2019). [DOI: 10.1002/jwmg.21751](https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.21751)

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