

Garden Wildlife: Bat Roosts in Hornsby Shire

What are Microbats?

Microbats are tiny bats weighing as little as 3 grams up to 40 grams. They are a small native mammal from the family Microchiroptera.

They are specifically adapted for flying and can have wing membranes up to 25cm.

They use both eyesight and echolocation to fly around the night searching for prey which are mostly insects. They can do this even on the darkest of nights.

Hornsby's bat species

Twelve species of microbats occur in the Hornsby Shire. Of these, five species are listed as 'threatened' under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. These include:

- Eastern Bent-wing Bat
- Eastern False Pipistrelle
- Eastern Freetail Bat
- Greater Broadnose Bat
- Large-footed Myotis

How can we help?

We can assist bats to survive by:

- Not removing trees with hollows or crevices
- Not disturbing roost sites particularly during breeding time (spring and summer)
- Not disturbing roost sites in winter when they congregate together for warmth.

Where do they roost?

Microbats roost in many places such as hollows or crevices in trees, caves or tunnels, stormwater drains or culverts, or the underside of bridges.

They need both daytime and night time roosts to rest, for protection from predators, social contact and breeding. They may change roosting places due to different weather, seasons or on a daily basis.

Significant roost sites are those needed for shelter in winter or for hibernation and maternity sites. Caves and tunnels that are important roost sites often have a number of features:

- Horizontal tunnels - either short or long
- A damp floor or free water
- High humidity
- Reduced air flow
- Areas that can be fully dark with a constant temperature
- A domed area where temperature and humidity are high



Southern Forest Bat
Photo: John Turbill NPWS



Tree hollow in Sydney Red Gum
Photo: John Turbill NPWS

