

# **LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF STRUCTURAL SQUIRREL AND BAT PROBLEMS**

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Several years ago, I was making a nuisance wildlife presentation to the buildings and grounds staff of a college campus. The audience indicated that the most frequent problems were with squirrels and bats. Thus, essentially on the spot, I gave them a "what I would do" approach for long-term management of these animals on a multi-building campus.

Limitations on squirrel control included the high values of aesthetics and historical preservation of many campus buildings. As practical within those limits, reduce squirrel access routes to the structures (keeping tree branches away from the buildings; barriers on utility lines; etc.). Especially with buildings that have repeat problems, annually inspect the roof lines during peak times of vulnerability to seek to catch problems before they occur or are well-advanced. Important times for such inspections are in the late winter/early spring (females seeking sites for raising young) and early- to mid-fall (squirrels setting up winter dens). When doing squirrel exclusion, think "metal".

With bats, first prioritize buildings according to the frequency of bat complaints and incidents. Then, starting with the buildings of highest priority, do interior exclusion to keep bats out of the human living space. Third, seek to determine if bat houses would have utility as alternative roosting sites. If yes, develop a strategy for effectively implementing their use while bat-proofing structures. Finally, starting with the buildings of highest priority, bat-proof the exterior of the structures utilizing checkvalves (one-way doors) when appropriate.

Cornell Cooperative Extension, with input from the NYS DEC and the NYS Dept. of Health, has produced an excellent video entitled "The Facts about Bats: Exploring Conflicts and Designing Solutions". See <http://wildlifecontrol.info/pubs/Pages/CornellUniversity.aspx> more information.