Bat Monitoring at Minnekhada Park 2026 Results Summary

Report by Erin Monastersky, MPA Volunteer Coordinator

Summary

2026 marked the 6th year of the Minnekhada Park Association managing the bat counts at Minnekhada Farm. There are two main count sites, the Dairy Barn (Cow/Sheep barn) and the Horse Stables. The Dairy Barn contains maternity colonies of two co-habitating species of bats, Yuma Myotis and Little Brown Myotis, while the horse stables contains a unique maternity colony of Townsend Big Eared Bats.

Overall, as you can see from the charts, the results of the counts show an improving trend for both colonies over the last four years, after a noticeable drop in 2022.

Methods

Bat Counts

A uniform counting technique was used for each individual site to ensure consistency. The number of volunteers varied from 6 to 10 participants each survey night. Five surveying nights were conducted in June (prior to pups emergence) and five counts were conducted in July (after pup emergence).

The surveys began around 15 minutes before sunset to align with the foraging time of the bats. Volunteers were paired up into teams of two and assigned to specific areas for the evening. Each volunteer was given a handheld counter to record the number of bats observed and instructed to note the time of the first and last bat sightings. Surveys concluded 10 minutes after the final bat observation.

At the horse stables, one volunteer in the pair counted the bats entering while the other counted the bats exiting. The difference between the two counts represented the total number of bats observed for that area. Counts from all stable areas were then summed to produce an overall count for the horse stables each night.

At the cow/sheep barn, each volunteer took their own count of bats exiting the barn for their assigned area. The two counts within each pair were averaged to produce an overall number for that area. Finally, totals from all barn areas were combined to provide the nightly count for the barns.

Bat Call Data

Acoustic observations were collected using the Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro application on an iPad. The program was used during the bat counts to help in identifying bat species during each survey. Additionally, a bat foraging survey was conducted at Minnekhada Marsh using the same device for an overview of bat foraging activity and behaviour in the area.

Incidental Observations

Last year, we were informed by the BC Community Bat Network (BC Bats) that additional vigilance was recommended in order to reduce the potential spread of White Nose Syndrome (WNS). Although there are no confirmed mortalities in BC yet, the fungus causing WNS has been identified in samples. As a result, we sprayed the bottom of volunteers' shoes with an alcohol based product after counts. It is recommended that anyone entering areas frequented by bats do the same.

During four of the counts one or more barn owls were observed entering one of the barns, suggesting the presence of predator pressure on the bat colony, although owls have been seen in past years. As well the sounds of owlets were also observed.

Specifically on the Townsend Big Eared Bats, we are noticing an increasing pattern where many of the bats are not exiting the stables. It is quite possible that we are undercounting by some margin as we only count bats that exit. The only way to do a definitive count would be to carefully access the actual colony while they are inactive. At the start of the season thorn bushes were removed from the stables, this was to prevent the bats from flying into bushes and getting stuck.

The Bat Condo that was built in 2020 is still not seeing much activity, however a smaller bat box which is attached to the outside is seeing activity with several bats spotted and some guano collected. A suggestion was made to take some of the fallen boards from the Dairy Barn and attach them to the condo, in order to create a familiar scent. This technique was used effectively at other locations. As well, three data loggers were placed in the condo to collect temperature data. We found that the temperature inside the condo was a suitable range from 25-35 degrees celsius. This data is continuing to be collected and will be used to assess the effectiveness of the bat condo.

Bat Count Summary:

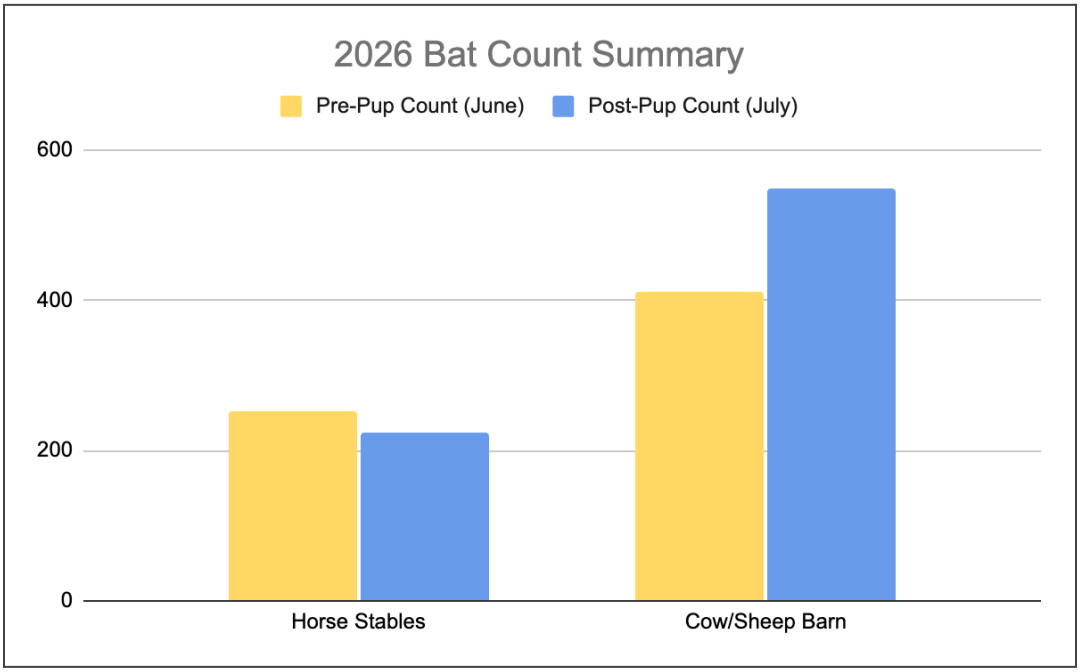
Table 1: Pre-Pup Counts (June)

	Horse Stables	Cow/Sheep Barn	Volunteers
10 June 2026	N/A	364	10
17 June 2026	197	N/A	10
19 June 2026	N/A	517	6
22 June 2026	307	N/A	10
24 June 2026	N/A	353	6
Average	**252**	**411**	**42**

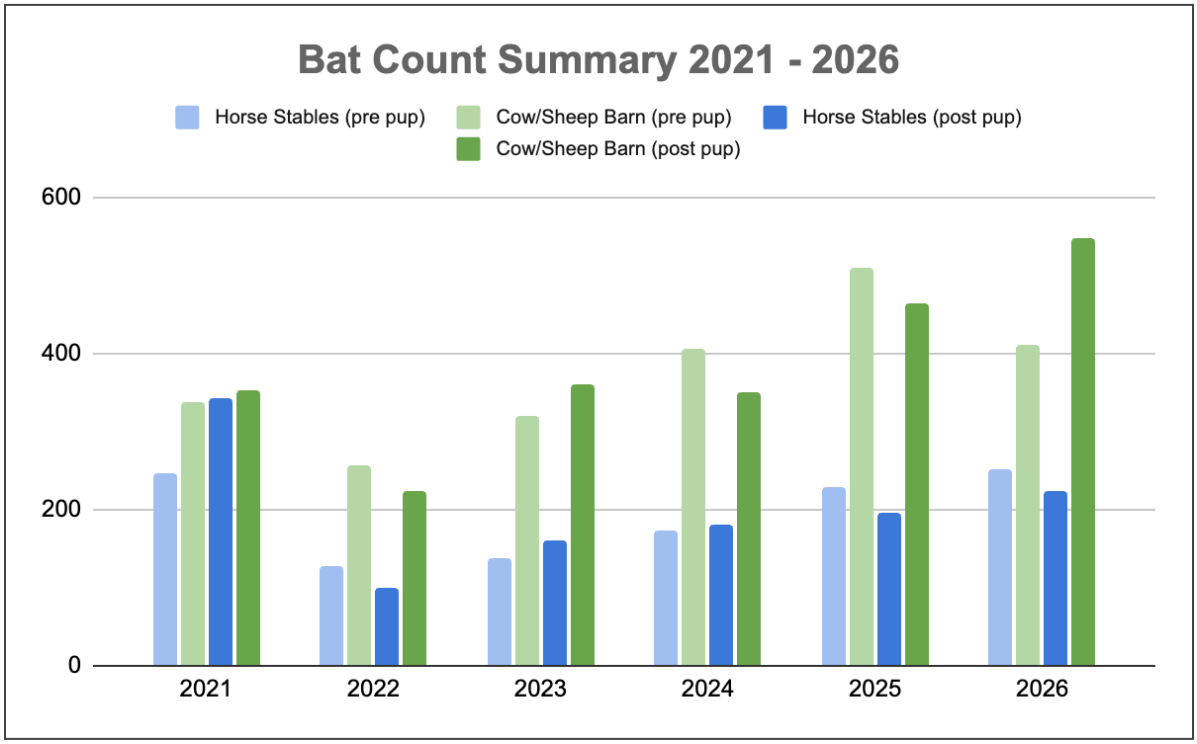
Table 2: Post -Pup Counts (July)

	Horse Stables	Cow/Sheep Barn	Volunteers
15 July 2026	270	N/A	8
17 July 2026	N/A	552	6
20 July 2026	195	N/A	7
22 July 2026	N/A	545	6
24 July 2026	204	N/A	7
Average	**223**	**548**	**34**

2026 Bat Count Site Summary



Bat Count Comparison 2021-2026

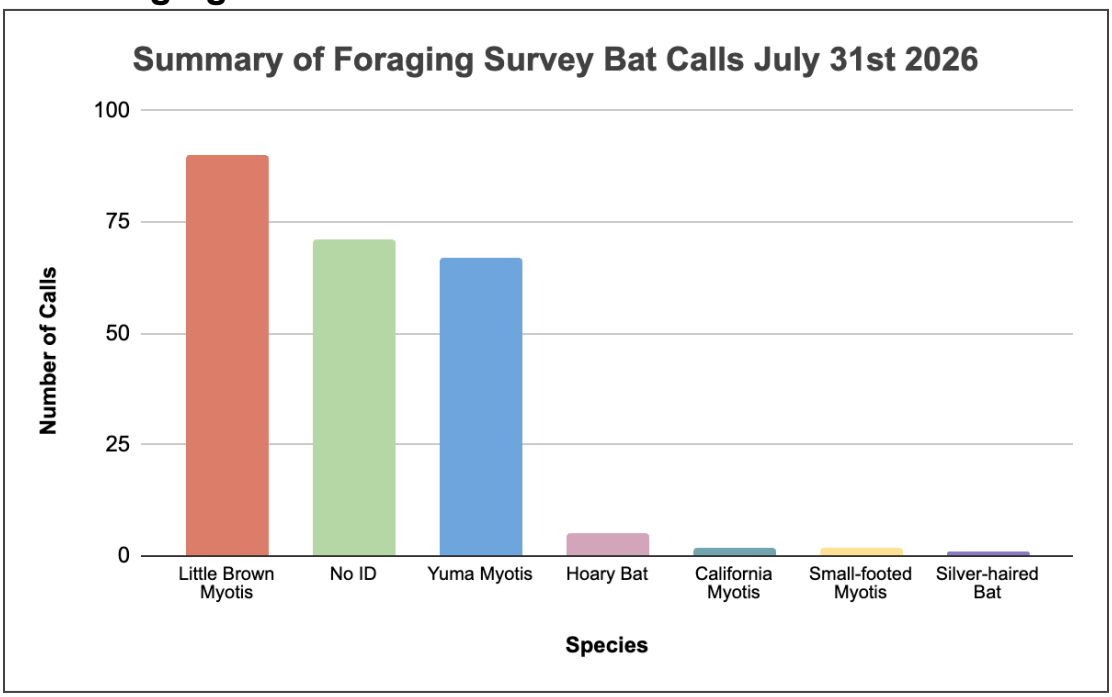


Foraging Survey Summary:

Table 3: Summary of Bat Calls Detected July 31st, 2026 at Minnekhada Marsh on Lodge Trail

Primary Bat Call ID*	Number of Calls**	Call %	Secondary Call ID
LASCIN - Hoary Bat	5	3%	TADBRA - Mexican Free-tailed
LASNOC - Silver-haired Bat	1	1%	LASCIN - Hoary Bat
MYOLUC - Little Brown Myotis	90	54%	MYOVOL - Long-legged Myotis
MYOYUM - Yuma Myotis	67	40%	N/A
MYOCAL - California Myotis	2	1%	MYOYUM - Yuma Myotis
MYOCIL - Small-footed Myotis	2	1%	MYOYUM - Yuma Myotis
Total Bat Calls Detected	167	100%	
Total No ID Calls	71		
Number of Bat Species Detected	6		

Bat Foraging Bat Call Results



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