

In late September the Meredith community learned of a bat infestation in one of its dormitories. Campus officials have since taken measures to ensure the safety of the affected students and to reduce the risk of additional incidence in the immediate future. All User emails were used to assure the community that campus staff have acted in the most environmentally friendly way to address the problem. To anyone not directly affected by the infestation, the adage of 'no news is good news' seems to lead to a feeling that the situation is resolved. There is no further need for concern.

Here are some basic facts to consider:

Many of North Carolina's bat species are either listed as at risk or endangered.

Bats typically only birth one pup a year.

Killing a bat is illegal.

Bats are the leading culprit in human exposure to rabies - but -

The incidence of rabies in bats is statistically low.

Bats are crucial in controlling insect populations and in the pollination of some plant species.

Because of these facts, it is important to preserve habitats for bats while also ensuring that bats are in a safe place away from human activity. This is for our safety and theirs.

Once the infestation is truly cleared from Campus property, what has or will become of the bats that once used these spaces to roost? A truly environmentally conscious and safety conscious means of keeping the bat population from treating buildings as potential habitat, is to provide alternate, appropriate habitats for the animals. Bat houses are low cost, easy to build or purchase, and safe to mount to posts far from usual human activity.