Little Brown Bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) are our most common bat found statewide. Medium sized with a 10 inch wingspread, they weigh about a quarter of an ounce, and are heaviest in autumn before they **hibernate**. Their brownish-bronze fur, like all bats, is soft and glossy with black, hairless wing membranes. **Females are slightly larger than males.**

Little browns eat nocturnal bugs like moths, beetles, flies, and mosquitoes, **catching insects with their wing or tail membrane,** and then lifting the food to their mouth. At dusk, when first emerging from their roost, the bats search for a body of water, where they skim the surface drinking before they start to hunt.

Little browns leave their summer roosts in autumn to search for tunnels, mine shafts or caves in which to hibernate. There they will cluster together on the ceilings, huddled against one another for warmth (below). **They return to the same hibernation sites year after year**, usually to the same exact spot in the cave or mine. The bats emerge from hibernation in April or May.

Females gather in summer nursery colonies of 10 to 1,000 individuals in dark, warm places like attics or barns. Males remain solitary, preferring to roost in hollow trees, under loose bark, behind shingles or the like. Only **one pup is born to each female** in June or early July. After four weeks, the young bat is fully grown, and ready to leave the colony. Little brown bats may live up to 25 years, an exceptional lifespan for such a tiny mammal.

Hung up about babysitting? In a nesting colony, when the adult females need to go out and hunt for food, they simply hang their baby bat up on a wall and let one of the 'babysitters' stay behind to watch over the entire nursery.

Big Brown Bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) are our second largest bats. **Only the hoary bat is larger**. Their wingspan is a little more than a foot. Similar in markings to the little brown bat, they are commonly found in attics, barns, hollow trees or beneath siding or shutters.

Big brown bats can be heard chattering when they fly at dusk, unlike most bats which emit sounds at such high decibels that the human ear cannot detect them. They are among the last bats to enter hibernation (sometimes as late as December) in caves, buildings, mines, and even storm sewers. Big Browns **prefer hibernating close to the mouth of a cave.** Females bear young, usually twins, in June. As the young mature and leave the nursery colony, adult males enter and take up residence in the previously all female colony. Big brown bats have lived up to 19 years in the wild.

Now that's loud! Humans are surrounded by sounds that we cannot hear, which might be a good thing. It's been said that bats communicate at decibels so loud and so high, if we could hear them calling out, it would sound as loud and intolerable as standing next to a jet plane as it takes off.