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Meet the Squad of Mosquito-Eating Species

JANE KIRCHNER | AUGUST 24, 2020



Hummingbirds eat hundreds of insects a day, including mosquitoes. Photo: Joost Daniels.

Mosquitoes are unwanted visitors to our backyards, but nature can offer solutions that don't involve chemicals or bug sprays. Often overlooked and under-appreciated, the following wildlife species are especially helpful for us all because they are excellent at consuming mosquitoes!

Check out this squad of mosquito-eaters and how they get the job done:

Common Nighthawk



We should all love seeing nighthawks catch and eat flying insects on the wing in summer skies above buildings, treetops, and grasslands. They are a champion among the birds that consume mosquitoes with their wide, bristle-lined mouths adapted to easily scoop prey from the air, and long, pointed wings and tails for precision aerial maneuvering.

Other birds known to dine on mosquitoes include purple martins, Eastern bluebirds, red-eyed vireos, yellow warblers, downy woodpeckers, house wrens, Baltimore orioles, and hummingbirds.

Dragonflies



The claim to fame for dragonflies in the fight against mosquito infestations is preventing mosquitoes from ever launching into the air. Mosquitoes lay eggs in bodies of standing water, and dragonfly larvae happily eat the mosquito larvae before they grow into adults. Dragonflies on the wing also eat adult mosquitoes. Awesome.

Red-Spotted Newt



The Eastern Red-Spotted Newt is found in forested areas, living near fresh water streams, ponds, marshes, lakes, or beaver ponds. Insects are a mainstay of their diet and these newts help control mosquito populations from Nova Scotia south to Georgia and as far west as western Tennessee by eating mosquito eggs and larvae.

Aquatic Turtles



Studies have shown that juvenile freshwater turtles eat mosquito larvae. [In one Louisiana study](#), researchers placed young red-eared slider turtles in roadside ditches filled with mosquito larvae. At the end of the study, the mosquito larvae population was reduced by 99%. Case closed, thanks to turtles!

Bats



Bats' sonar-like means of hunting down their prey makes mosquitoes easy targets for bats to catch—and their appetite for mosquitoes is undeniable. [A University of Wisconsin study](#) found evidence of mosquito consumption in over 70 percent of the guano samples from [little brown bats](#), suggesting that bats in their natural habitat eat far more mosquitoes than previously thought.

We're busy all year long protecting habitat, recovering declining populations, and helping to create wildlife friendly gardens so these mosquito-eaters can thrive and you can better enjoy summer evenings outside.

Please join with us to support mosquito consuming wildlife by making a donation today.

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This blog is a part of a series on managing mosquitoes. More blogs in the series:

- [What Purpose Do Mosquitoes Serve?](#)
- [What You Need to Know Before Spraying Your Yard for Mosquitoes](#)
- [Three Natural Ways to Reduce Mosquito Bites](#)

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