



The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

**Keeping a Great Lake 'Great' Since 1998!**

## **Bats and Black Cats: Spooky or Misunderstood?**

Halloween can be a little spooky for the little ghouls and ghosts haunting their way door-to-door in search of candy. When bone-chilling cackles from the skeletons hanging by the front door echo through the night or the flames from a candle lick at the carefully carved pumpkins lining the doorsteps, it's easy to get a little bit spooked. Unfortunately, many people are also spooked by some very neat animals that have gained a bad reputation – especially around Halloween.

### **Black Cats**

As a trusty companion to witches, black cats are historically seen as bad omens or a trigger for superstitious activities. However, in many places around the world such as Scotland and England, black cats are a sign of good luck (especially when they cross your path).

For many years, animal shelters refused to allow black cats to be adopted out during the month of October in fear that they would be mistreated. According to the OSPCA, this is no longer the case. Studies have shown no evidence to support an increase in problematic black cat related events.



### **Bats**

A fuzzy, silent hunter flying through the night can be unnerving for some people. Around this time of year, bats are depicted as "creepy" or "gross" in Halloween decorations, movies and other types of media. But when you take a closer look, bats are really cool creatures.

Bats are an incredible natural pest control, eating up to 1,200 mosquitoes per hour! Some types of nectar-eating bats are pollinators for plants like walnuts, cactus and agave – which is used to make tequila. Even their poop (called guano) is important as it's one of the richest fertilizers in the world.

The only thing that is scary about bats is how quickly they are disappearing. Bat populations are being devastated by a fungus commonly known as white-nose syndrome. This disease affects hibernating bats by causing them to become active in the winter which burns fat stores needed to survive until the warm weather returns.

## Spiders

Creepy crawlies or just a little misunderstood? Halloween can be a nightmare for arachnophobes, but it's a great time to highlight why spiders deserve a little bit of kindness.

Spiders are highly diverse within the approximately 30,000 different known species. Some are decorated with elaborate colours and patterns, others are well adapted to make huge jumps relative to the side of their small bodies. Next time you see a spider in your home, consider gently removing it and placing it safely outside.



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## Thank You to The Colin Dyke and Leslie Wood Foundation

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The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation would like to sincerely thank the **Colin Dyke and Leslie Wood Foundation** for their very generous donation of \$5,000 to our coastal conservation programs.

We are working hard to protect and restore the unique Lake Huron ecosystems we are so lucky to have, and our coastal stewardship projects are successful because of thoughtful contributions like this from our generous donors.

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## Halloween Doesn't Have to be Scary for the Environment

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Each year millions of tonnes of costumes, plastic props, decorations, and candy wrappers are dumped, clogging our landfills, and potentially polluting our Great Lakes!

Many of the plastic decorations and costume accessories sold are not able to be recycled. Here are our tips to **make your Halloween a treat for Mother Nature!**



A haunting amount of plastic waste is created from the millions of pounds of Halloween candy that are sold each Halloween. Choose candy that comes in more **environmentally friendly**



**packaging.** Candy that comes in cardboard, paper, or foil wrapping is a better choice. Our Executive Director miiiiight like Smarties a little too much.

Shop smart! **Stay away from unsustainable ingredients** like palm oil when choosing Halloween candy.

Another option is to avoid candy altogether and to give trick-or-treaters **useful treats**, such as pencils, crayons, Halloween-themed erasers, or other inexpensive items you can find at your local dollar store.

We didn't eat the vast majority of the 80,172 metric tonnes of pumpkins grown in Canada last year. If you don't **compost** yet, Halloween is a great time to get started! Your jack-o-lantern will make a great addition to your new compost bin.



**Roasted pumpkin seeds** make a delicious healthy snack once you've had your fill of candy!

If you're having a Halloween party, **choose reusable dishes and cutlery.** And of course impress your friends with your beautiful **paper, glass, or stainless steel straws!** Plastic from items like tablecloths often ends up polluting our Great Lake, so make sure to use **cloth tablecloths** that can be washed and reused!



Make sure your little ghosts and goblins are carrying **reusable bags and containers** to collect their Halloween candy in. Better yet, have fun with your children decorating old pillowcases with paint and other craft supplies you find around your house.

Instead of buying a costume that may only be worn once and end up in a landfill, **make your own costumes** with items from around your house and thrift stores.

**Renting a costume** is a great option to reduce your environmental impact. If you do buy a costume, choose one made from **natural materials** like cotton or wool. Choose well-made ones that can be used again and again by friends and family, or donated to your local thrift store.

While your children are out trick-or-treating, bring your own collection bag and **pick up litter** along the way to help clean up your coastal community.

Decorate your home with some spooky **homemade decorations.** Many of these ideas for decorations can be made with items from your recycling bin!

Go natural with Halloween makeup – You can easily make your own **makeup and fake blood** and other spooky special effects with simple kitchen ingredients like flour, corn syrup, and food colouring.

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As a non-profit, charitable organization, The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation supports environmental efforts along the Canadian coast of Lake Huron. Thank you for supporting our Coastal Centre!

We rely on donations from people like you to keep doing the amazing work we do along the shores of Lake Huron. Your contributions help engage communities, educate individuals, and create change for a brighter environmental future on our Great Lake!

**DONATE TODAY!**

